
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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Northern Ireland Assembly, Printed Paper Office,
Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1078

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 07 November 2008

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Community Relations Council

Mr Moutray asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the work carried out by the Community Relations Council to attract applications for (i) core funding; and (ii) project funding, from the evangelical protestant community, in each of the last three years. (AQW 1596/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Community Relations Council (CRC) is open to applications from all sections of the community. Below is a summary of the overall approach of the organisation to attracting applications.

All CRC Grant Schemes are publicly advertised through the organisation's website and various community networks i.e. NICVA, through District Council Community Relations Officers and Good Relations Officers and, in the case of the CRC's EU Programme, advertising is also carried out in the press and through the SEUPB website.

All community and voluntary based groups have open access to the Schemes. In addition, various Information Events on funding opportunities are held throughout the region by all the funding schemes. All grant applications received are processed in accordance with agreed Council practices/operating principles and receive fair and equal treatment. Review/complaints procedures are also in place.

Community Relations Council

Mr Moutray asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the applications for (i) core; and (ii) project, funding from organisations

in the evangelical protestant community, apart from ECONI/Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, received by the Community Relations Council, in each of the last five years. (AQW 1597/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The following organisations have made applications to the Community Relations Council over the last five years. In the absence of a definition of 'protestant evangelical community' a full list of groups involved in/protestant church-based projects has been provided. The information is provided by year and by grant.

(I) 2008/09 CORE FUNDING

Group	Amount Requested	Decision
174	£44,216	Approved – initially for 1 year
LINC Resource Centre	£86,653	Approved – initially for 1 year
Forthspring	£25,558	Declined

2008/09 PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE COSTS

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
LINC Resource Centre	White City Community Development Association	£36,775
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£35,000

(II) 2008/09 –PROJECT FUNDING

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
174 Trust	Youth Project	£2,575	£2,500
174 Trust	Facilitation for Evaluation	£2,467.50	£2,467.50
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society 2008	£990	£990
BT14 Churches Forum	Facilitation of Establishment of Forum	£2,500	£1,930
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian project	Community Fun Day	£600	£600
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Group	Streetreach at 174 Trust	£250	£250
Markethill Presbyterian Church	Networking Across The Divide	£6,000	£0

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Ormeau Churches Together	GLU	£500	£500
PCI	Peacemaking Project 2006-09	£22,500	£7,500
Quaker House	Quilting Towards A Shared Future	£4,512.50	£2,000
Restoration Ministries	Forward Together In Diversity	£3,775	£3,775
Summer Madness	Summer Madness	£3,000	£3,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Youth Project	£1,734	£1,734
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Training Project	£1,900	£1,750
Church of Ireland Hard Gospel Project	WWJB Project	£5,000	£0
The Corrymeela Community	Connecting Cultures	£3,505	£3,505
Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 08	£6,180	£3,000
YMCA Lurgan	Lurgan SOS	£2,490	£2,490
Linc Resource Centre	Women In Conflict	£7,365	£3,000
Youth With A Mission	Faith & Conflict Conference	£6,000	£5,000

(I) 2007/08 CORE FUNDING

Group	Amount requested	Decision
Corrymeela	£129,050	Approved – 2 year contract

2007/08 PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/ programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£20,000
LINC Resource Centre	Bonfire management project.	13,500

(II) 2007/08 PROJECT COSTS

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles Inter-Church Group	Annual Educational Visit	£550	£550
East Belfast Mission	A Theological Conversation	£3,600	£2,000
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles Inter-Church Group	Young Families Group	£1,000	£1,000
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Church	Community Fun Day	£2,232	£500
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Peacemaking Project 2006-09	£22,500	£7,500
Quaker House	Quilt Project Phase 2	£7,950	£4,000
Restoration Ministries	Hospitality Evenings	£3,870	£2,070
Linc Resource Centre	Mentoring Programme	£7,205	£5,000
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£1,160	£1,160
Restoration Ministries	Faith & Friendship	£1,030	£550
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£1,160	£640
Restoration Ministries	Conference-Megan McKenna	£800	£600
Summer Madness	Street Reach	£11,000	£7,000
Corrymeela	Connecting Cultures	£2,500	£2,500
The Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 07	£4,092	£1,692

(I) 2006/07 CORE FUNDING

Group	Amount requested	Decision
Forthspring	£30,849	Approved – 2 year contract
174 Trust	£41,656	Approved – 2 year contract
LINC	£31,458	Approved – 2 year contract

(II) 2006/07 PROJECT FUNDING

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Adullam Christian Ministries	25th Anniversary Integrated Education Exhibition	£8,000	£4,000
Ballymena Inter-Church Alpha Organising Committee	BICA Course	£3,000	£0
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society 2006	£742.50	£742.50
Belmont Council of Churches	Significant Places in the life of St Patrick	£550	£550
Church of God Shankill	What's it all about?	£2,000	£2,000
City of Belfast YMCA	Staff Training	£1,920	£0
Linc Resource Centre	Rathcoole CR Work	£2,000	£2,000
Summer Madness	Street Reach	£9,500	£5,000
Summer Madness	International Reconciliation Conference	£7,500	£5,000
Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 2006	£4,610	£3,500

(I) 2005/06 CORE FUNDING

Group	Amount Requested	Decision
174 Trust	£38,802	Declined
LINC Resource Centre	£44,800	Approved – 1 year contract
The Link (N'ards)	£40,095	Declined

2005/06 PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
174 Trust	To promote the building of bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast, by encouraging mutual understanding through honest dialogue and meaningful engagement.	£33,382

(II) 2005/06 PROJECT FUNDING

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Training For Trainers on Non-Violence	£4,000	£4,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Summer Diversionary Programme	£5,000	£4,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Summer Diversionary Programme	£1,500	£1,500
174 Trust	Staff & Management Training	£3,565	£3,565
Ballymacarett Inter-Church Group	Group Outing to Downpatrick Area	£179	£179
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society Project	£742.50	£742.50
Church of Ireland	Shared Future	£1,800	£1,390
Conference of Religious Ireland	Joppa Project	£10,000	£5,000
Cookstown & District Inter-Church Forum	Community Event	£17,000	£0
Down & Dromore Reconciliation Committee	Rwanda Visit – bursary costs	£10,000	£5,000
Dungannon & District Clergy Forum	Strategic Plan	£2,950	£2,950
East Belfast Mission	Breaking the cycle	£2,340	£1,560
Fermanagh Churches Forum	Programme 05-06	£1,375	£800
Gilford & Tullyish Churches Together	Community BBQ	£3,300	£1,400
Gilford & Tullyish Churches Together	Exploration of diversity of background	£4,300	£2,100
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Christmas Weekend	£1,500	£1,100

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Inter-Church Group	£500	£500
Link Family & Community Centre	Community Relations Project	£5,985	£3,500
Immanuel Church of Ireland	Creating Community	£1,230	£1,230
New Mossley Presbyterian Youth Club	Cross Community Weekend in Corrymeela	£1,500	£1,500
Restoration Ministries	Difficult Conversations	£600	£460
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£1,160	£1,160
Sligo Presbyterian Church	Gala Celebrations of Christmas Peace	£52510	£0
Summer Madness	International Reconciliation Conference	£9,250	£5,000
Church of Ireland	Hard Gospel Project	£5,000	£2,292
Youth with a Mission	Forgiveness Curriculum Project	£6,000	£0
Linc Resource Centre	Linc/An Eochiar Initiative	£2,900	£2,540
Linc Resource Centre	Creative Expressions	£1,416	£1,396
Linc Resource Centre	Mobile Phone Network (P)	£2,000	£1,492

(I) 2004/05 CORE FUNDING

Group	Amount Requested	Decision
174 Trust	£37,829	Declined

2004/05 PROJECT FUNDING

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Community Relations and Churches	Churches Building the Peace	£4,000	Withdrawn
Community Relations & Churches	Churches Building the Peace	£4,000	Withdrawn

Group	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Corrymeela	YNI	£3,900	Withdrawn
Diocese of Derry and Raphoe	Peacebuilding Strategy Conference	£9,100	£5,000
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Christmas Family Weekend	£1,000	£1,000
East Belfast Mission	Past to Future	£4,900	£3,450
Parish of Glenavy	150 years Celebration of Church Building	£300	£200
P.C.I	Peacemaking Project 2005-08	£22,500	£7,500
P.C.I	Day Conference	£2,000	£1,836
Restoration Ministries	Difficult Conversation	£731	£731
Linc Resource Centre	Mount Vernon Young Men Awareness	£1,000	£664
Linc Resource Centre	Community Relations Improvement	£2,630	£1,835
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Discussion Group	£700	£550

Community Relations Council

Mr Moutray asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the organisations from the protestant evangelical community, apart from ECONI/Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, that have been awarded (i) core; and (ii) project, funding by the Community Relations Council, in each of the last ten years. (AQW 1598/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The following organisations have made applications to the Community Relations Council over the last ten years. In the absence of a definition of 'protestant evangelical community' a full list of groups involved in/protestant church-based projects has been provided. The information is provided by year and by grant.

(I) 2008/09 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£132,088

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
174 Trust	To promote the building of bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast, by encouraging mutual understanding through honest dialogue and meaningful engagement.	£44,000
LINC Resource Centre	To develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to community relations work in Protestant communities across North Belfast and to develop co-operative linkages with organisations in the Catholic community in order to develop both intra and inter community relations.	£78,769

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
The Corrymeela Community	Connecting Cultures	£3,505
Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 08	£3,000
Linc Resource Centre	Women In Conflict	£3,000
YMCA Lurgan	Lurgan SOS	£2,490
Youth With A Mission	Faith & Conflict Conference	£5,000

(I) 2007/08 CORE**PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE COSTS**

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
LINC Resource Centre	White City Community Development Association	£36,775
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£35,000

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£128,866
174 Trust	To promote the building of bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast, by encouraging mutual understanding through honest dialogue and meaningful engagement.	£33,959
LINC Resource Centre	To develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to community relations work in Protestant communities across North Belfast and to develop co-operative linkages with organisations in the Catholic community in order to develop both intra and inter community relations.	£29,977
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£21,134

2008/09 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
174 Trust	Youth Project	£2,500
174 Trust	Facilitation for Evaluation	£2,467.50
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society 2008	£990
BT14 Churches Forum	Facilitation of Establishment of Forum	£1,930
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian project	Community Fun Day	£600
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Group	Streetreach at 174 Trust	£250
Ormeau Churches Together	GLU	£500
PCI	Peacemaking Project 2006-09	£7,500
Quaker House	Quilting Towards A Shared Future	£2,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Youth Project	£1,734
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Training Project	£1,750
Restoration Ministries	Forward Together In Diversity	£3,775
Summer Madness	Summer Madness	£3,000

PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE COSTS

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£20,000
LINC Resource Centre	Bonfire management project.	13,500

2007/08 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
East Belfast Mission	A Theological Conversation	£2,000
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles Inter-Church Group	Annual Educational Visit	£550

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles Inter-Church Group	Young Families Group	£1,000
Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Church	Community Fun Day	£500
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Peacemaking Project 2006-09	£7,500
Quaker House	Quilt Project Phase 2	£4,000
Restoration Ministries	Hospitality Evenings	£2,070
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£1,160
Restoration Ministries	Faith & Friendship	£550
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£640
Restoration Ministries	Conference- Megan McKenna	£600
Summer Madness	Street Reach	£7,000
Corrymeela	Connecting Cultures	£2,500
Linc Resource Centre	Mentoring Programme	£5,000
The Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 07	£1,692

(I) 2006/07 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£125,000
174 Trust	To promote the building of bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast, by encouraging mutual understanding through honest dialogue and meaningful engagement.	£32,940
LINC Resource Centre	To develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to community relations work in Protestant communities across North Belfast and to develop co-operative linkages with organisations in the Catholic community in order to develop both intra and inter community relations.	£30,000
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/ programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£20,500

(II) 2006/07 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Adullam Christian Ministries	25th Anniversary Integrated Education Exhibition	£4,000
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society 2006	£742.50
Belmont Council of Churches	Significant Places in the life of St Patrick	£550
Church of God Shankill	What's it all about?	£2,000
Linc Resource Centre	Rathcoole CR Work	£2,000
Summer Madness	Street Reach	£5,000
Summer Madness	International Reconciliation Conference	£5,000
Y Zone	Community Outreach Programme 2006	£3,500

(I) 2005/06 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	150,000
LINC Resource Centre	To develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to community relations work in Protestant communities across North Belfast and to develop co-operative linkages with organisations in the Catholic community in order to develop both intra and inter community relations.	30,000
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	20,500

PATHFINDER FUNDING – CORE COSTS

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
174 Trust	To promote the building of bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast, by encouraging mutual understanding through honest dialogue and meaningful engagement.	£33,382

(II) 2005/06 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Ballymacarett Inter-Church Group	Group Outing to Downpatrick Area	£179

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Training For Trainers on Non-Violence	£4,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Summer Diversionary Programme	£4,000
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Summer Diversionary Programme (P)	£1,500
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Strengthening Civic Society Project	£742.50
Church of Ireland	Shared Future	£1,390
Conference of Religious Ireland	Joppa Project	£5,000
Down & Dromore Reconciliation Committee	Rwanda Visit – bursary costs	£5,000
Dungannon & District Clergy Forum	Strategic Plan	£2,950
Fermanagh Churches Forum	Programme 05-06	£800
Gilford & Tullyish Churches Together	Community BBQ	£1,400
Gilford & Tullyish Churches Together	Exploration of diversity of background	£2,100
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Christmas Weekend	£1,100
Linc Resource Centre	Linc/An Eochiar Initiative	£2,540
Linc Resource Centre	Creative Expressions	£1,396
Linc Resource Centre	Mobile Phone Network (P)	£1,492
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Inter-Church Group	£500
Immanuel Church of Ireland	Creating Community	£1,230
New Mossley Presbyterian Youth Club	Cross Community Weekend in Corrymeela	£1,500
Restoration Ministries	Difficult Conversations	£460
Restoration Ministries	Monthly Networking Meetings	£1,160
Church of Ireland	Hard Gospel Project	£2,292
Summer Madness	International Reconciliation Conference	£5,000

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
East Belfast Mission	Breaking the Cycle	£1,560
174 Trust	Staff & Management Training	£3,565

(I) 2004/05 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£175,950
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/ programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£20,500

(II) 2004/05 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Diocese of Derry and Raphoe	Peacebuilding Strategy Conference	£5,000
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Christmas Family Weekend	£1,000
Parish of Glenavy	150 years Celebration of Church Building	£200
Linc Resource Centre	Mount Vernon Young Men Awareness	£664
Linc Resource Centre	Community Relations Improvement	£1,835
P.C.I	Peacemaking Project 2005-08	£7,500
P.C.I	Day Conference	£1,836
East Belfast Mission	Past to Future	£3,450
Restoration Ministries	Difficult Conversation	£731
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Discussion Group	£550

(I) 2003/04 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£190,343
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/ programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£23,500

(II) 2003/04 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Churches Initiatives Group	Dealing with Past Grief Consultant	£1,500
COI Youth Council	Video Shorts Project	£3,270
COI Student Centre	Community Relations Evening Sessions	£805
Community Relations and Christians	Serviced Accommodation	£1,620
Community Relations and Christians	Courses on Moving Beyond Sectarianism	£1,320
Community Relations and Christians	Review and Development of Strategic Plan	£725
Cookstown Churches Forum	Series of religious talks	£590
Fermanagh Churches Forum	Bursaries to attend Corrymeela Residential	£510
ForthSpring Inter-Community Group	Study Visit	£2,244
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Various events	£500
Glenavy Parish	BBQ	£100
Glenavy Parish	Dialogue with local Orange Order	£500
Link Family & Community Centre	Action Research	£7,500
Lisburn YMCA	Millennium Volunteer Project	£4,005
Lisburn YMCA	Community Relations Project	£2,000
Knock Presbyterian Peace Group	Peace Building Weekend	£550
Gilnahirk/ St Colmcilles	Joint Reconciliation Venture to Botswana	£2,000
St Hilda's Church	Community Fun Day	£700

(I) 2002/03 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£199,358
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£19,831

(II) 2002/03 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Restoration Ministries	Hospitality Evenings	£3,645
Three Churches	Building Bridges of Understanding	£600
Restoration Ministries	Anam Cara Partners Hip Programme	£2,414

(I) 2001/02 CORE

Group	Purpose Of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£182,943
Forthspring	To provide a range of project/programme interventions to address the needs of the local community.	£22,650

2001/02 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Community Christians Together in Ballymena	Community Relations Residential	£1,600
Presbyterian Church Peace and Peacemaking Committee	One-day conference for Peace Agents form Presbyterian Church	£625
Revival Ministries	3 Day Residential Conference	£1,000
Church of Ireland Youth Council	Transforming the Community	£5,000
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Training and Support Conference for Congregational Peace Agents	£1,000
East Belfast Mission	Conference Costs	£2,000
Ballysillan Presbyterian Church	Meeting Costs (Cross Community Project)	£1,050
Leuenberg Church Fellowship	Conference on Reconciled Diversity	£400

(I) 2000/01 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£168,843

(II) 2000/01 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Community Restoration Ministries	Monthly Community Relations Event	£1,795
Methodist Church in Ireland	Churches support and work with victims of the Troubles	£400
Ards Presbyterian Christian Training & Resources Centre	Residential Conference	£500
Springfield Road Methodist Church	Four-day conference (Anglo-Irish Methodist Forum)	£500
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Training Programme/ Resource Book	£5,000
Dromore Presbytery Peacemaking Committee	The Gospel, Blame and New Relationships	£400
Roe Valley Clerical Study Group	Conference Costs	£200
Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	Community Audit	£3,850

1999/2000 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£176,288

(II) 1999/2000 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Dromore Presbytery Peacemaking Committee	Inter Church Meeting	£267.94
World Community for Christian Mediation	International Symposium	£5,000
Presbyterian Church Peace and Peacemaking Committee	Half day conference for clergy and lay leaders	£1,000
Lamb of God Community	Publish and distribute booklet ("Bridging the Gap")	£3,400
Community Relations & Christians	Series of plays and workshops	£2,500
South Down Ecumenical Clerical Study Group	Seminar costs	£380

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Linc Resource Centre	Publication of Document	£5,000
174 Trust	Conference Costs	£366.50

1998/99 CORE

Group	Purpose of Funding	Amount
Corrymeela	To advance reconciliation and healing through provision of residential facilities and programme activities.	£165,000

1998/99 PROJECT

Group	Project	Amount Awarded
Christian Fellowship Church Ards	Community Relations Audit	£2,000
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Conference- Facing Change	£1,275
Women in Faith	Conference Costs	£217.39
Craic with Christ	Programme Costs	£2,000
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Conference Costs	£1,000
Dromore Presbytery Peacemaking Committee	Series of meetings on Identity and the Bible	£230
Lamb of God Community	A Journey in Understanding Course	£200
Lamb of God Community	Programme Costs	£400
Townsend St Presbyterian Church	Study Day for Clergy on Community Relations	£200
Linc Resource Centre	Magazine Costs	£1,240
Forthspring	Spirituality Programme	£800
Lamb of God	Programme Costs	£400
Community Relations and Christians	Series of Talks	£400
174 Trust	Cross Community Celebration	£150

Community Relations Council

Mr Moutray asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the work it has undertaken to ensure that the Community Relations Council does not discriminate against any community when awarding (i) core; and (ii) project funding.

(AQW 1599/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Community Relations Council (CRC) is subject to all of the equality legislation that applies to public bodies.

Equality Legislation

Mr Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how it defines sexual orientation when interpreting equality legislation.

(AQW 1604/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The interpretation of equality legislation is a matter for the courts. However, sexual orientation is defined in Regulation 2(1) of The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and Regulation 2 (2) of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 as meaning:-

“a sexual orientation towards:

- persons of the same sex;
- persons of the opposite sex;
- persons of the same sex and of the opposite sex.”

Capital Realisation Taskforce

Mr Beggs asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an overview of the recommendations made by the Capital Realisation Taskforce.

(AQO 860/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Capital Realisations Taskforce made recommendations to the Executive covering the following areas: -

- The quantum of assets that might be realised
- Structures to support the implementation of the Taskforce’s findings
- Developing an Asset Management Strategy
- Incentivisation of departments to realise underutilised assets
- The Creation of a Central Asset Register for public bodies
- The need for continuous assessment of market conditions
- The need to determine how the planning system can better support the realisation of public sector assets.

Victims Groups

Mr Moutray asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the meetings attended by (i) the First Minister; and (ii) the Deputy First Minister, with representatives of victims’ groups, since devolution.

(AQW 1698/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

Since assuming office on 8th May 2007, we have held meetings with the British Irish Rights Watch.

The deputy First Minister has met representatives of the Disabled Police Officers Association and from the Shankill Stress and Trauma Centre.

In addition, we have both met with the Consultative Group on the Past to discuss victims’ issues.

The Junior Ministers have also had regular meetings with a variety of victims’ groups.

Equality Provisions

Mr Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how it interprets religious belief when implementing equality provisions including those in (i) the Northern Ireland Act 1998; (ii) UK equality legislation; and (iii) EU directives.

(AQW 1699/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

Individual practices or observances resulting from religious belief are protected by both domestic and European equality law. However, it is for the courts and tribunals to determine how such practices and observances are protected in light of the particular issues and facts involved in each case. In determining such cases, courts and tribunals have to balance competing rights and interests.

Designation of Public Authorities

Mr Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list all ‘other persons’ designated as a public body in accordance with Section 75(3)(d) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

(AQW 1703/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

Section 75(3)(d) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 states “any other person designated for the purposes of this section by order made by the Secretary of State”. Consequently this is a matter for the Northern Ireland Office. We would suggest that you write to the Secretary of State in this regard.

Equality Provisions

Mr Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for its interpretation of ‘religious belief’ when implementing all equality provisions in (i) the Northern Ireland Act 1998; (ii) other UK equality legislation; and (iii) EU Directives. (AQW 1706/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The law often defines terms or expressions used in a statutory provision or applies definitions contained in other statutory provisions. For the purposes of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, section 98(1) of that Act provides that the term “religious belief” is to be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). Article 2(3) of FETO provides that a reference to a person’s religious belief includes a reference to his supposed religious belief or the absence or supposed absence of any particular religious belief.

In relation to EU law, the definition of religious belief in FETO has been further clarified to comply with the requirements of the “religion or belief” strands of Council Directive 2000/78/EC. The Fair Employment and Treatment Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 inserted a definition of “religious belief” into Article 2(2) of FETO. That definition defines religious belief as including “any religion or similar philosophical belief”. No further explanation of the terms “religion” or “similar philosophical belief” is offered in FETO. Ultimately, it falls to the courts and tribunals to rule on what is meant by “religious belief” as a matter of domestic or Community law.

Display of Flags

Mr A Maskey asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration it has given to a re-examination of the current inter-agency protocol for the display of flags in public areas; and what plans it has to progress this matter. (AQW 1785/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The inter-agency Flags Protocol that was launched prior to devolution in 2005 is still current and operational. The preliminary work that began earlier this summer on the review of the Protocol will continue.

We hope that you are reassured that the current protocol will continue to be implemented as it presently stands.

We also hope that our approach to the review of the Protocol, on foot of the outcome of the wider consultation on the Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration can be seen as adding to the effectiveness of the review.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to make a statement on the Woodland Trust’s Vision for Woodland in Northern Ireland, and if it recognises that the proposals in the report could deliver on many of the Executive’s commitments. (AQW 1851/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The ‘Vision for Woodland’ document presents a useful perspective on the environmental and social aspects of forestry. We believe that this provides useful commentary in support of the Forestry Strategy ‘Northern Ireland Forestry, A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth’ produced by the Forest Service in 2006, and it can help inform decision-making in relation to sustainable development.

Capital Realisation Taskforce

Mr Hamilton asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister if (i) the Capital Realisation Taskforce report has been released under the Freedom of Information Act; and (ii) their Department intends to publish it. (AQW 1855/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

A copy of the report of Capital Realisations Taskforce has been released under the Freedom of Information Act.

We are considering the issue of general publication of this report.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister if the Department acknowledges the importance of a woodland creation target in delivering on the commitment to enhance the natural environment, as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy. (AQW 1914/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

We recognise the valuable role that the forestry industry plays within the rural economy and the potential opportunities emerging through the developing renewable energy crops sector. We also understand the widespread social and environmental benefits afforded by woodlands. The importance of a woodland creation target, within the context of the Northern Ireland Forestry Strategy, is considered an important part of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

Regeneration of Ebrington Site

Mr Durkan asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide a progress update on regeneration of the Ebrington site in Derry/Londonderry. (AQW 1917/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: ILEX, the urban regeneration company owned jointly by this Department and the Department for Social Development, has responsibility for the redevelopment of the Ebrington site in Derry/Londonderry and we are pleased to report substantial progress.

An extensive Masterplan was published in October 2006 outlining the vision for the development of the former military barracks. The key to delivering this will be the appointment of a private sector development partner to attract investment. This appointment is expected to be made next year.

In the meantime, a major demolition programme is now complete, as is detailed work to restore the 19th century Star Fort. Planning applications have been lodged for the refurbishment of some of the listed buildings. Work is also well underway to design the infrastructure for the site, for example, the competitive tender competition for the Parade Ground design will be advertised shortly.

A key development for Ebrington and for the city as a whole will be the outcome of the EU funding bid for the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Foyle to link the Waterside with the Cityside between Ebrington and the Guildhall. An announcement is expected shortly.

Sustainable Development Commissioner

Mr McCarthy asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when it is expected that an appointment will be made to the post of Sustainable Development Commissioner. (AQO 874/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: We view the appointment of a local Commissioner to the Sustainable Development Commission as an important part of our plans to progress the sustainable development agenda both within Government and in the wider public domain. We are currently considering the ways in which we can most effectively take this matter forward in support of our long-term plans and priorities for sustainable development.

Public Procurement

Mrs McGill asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the role public

procurement can play in achieving the PfG commitments to redress poverty. (AQO 896/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) and ISNI Strategy are very clear about the role that public procurement can play in redressing poverty.

We are about promoting greater employment opportunities in rural areas and disadvantaged communities.

We are about developing new and innovative measures that will address existing patterns of socio-economic disadvantage and target resources and efforts towards those in greatest objective need.

We will ensure that the reforms and restructuring will be compliant with recognised best practice in social procurement guidelines.

We will be seeking to have in place employment plans; building opportunities for apprenticeships into major delivery contracts – helping those eager to develop key skills valued in the workplace – and all done through a tendering process that prioritises the most economically advantageous option, seeking to maximise the social and employment opportunities for all our people.

From that it will be clear that public sector procurement can play an active and effective role in the process of tackling patterns of socio-economic disadvantage.

Public sector procurement expenditure by Northern Ireland Departments, their Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Public Corporations, accounted for approximately £2.2 billion of supplies, services and construction works in 2007-2008. The leverage provided by this level of spend will provide significant opportunities to support the delivery of the Executive's priorities, set out in the Programme for Government 2008-2011.

Public procurement therefore has an important role to play in regeneration and achieving socio-economic objectives whilst adhering to legal requirements. It is a challenging area for government which we must seek to exploit in developing the Executive's Regional Economic Strategy and taking forward poverty initiatives.

Guidance on integrating Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement was launched on 29 May 2008. The guidance provides practical advice and case studies for policy makers and practitioners to assist them to more effectively integrate equality of opportunity and sustainable development considerations into public sector procurement.

Although the guidance has been developed by Central Procurement Directorate, working in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, it is for

individual Departments to determine how best to apply it in their respective business areas.

It is this implementation of the guidance, supported by appropriate training, which will support the Executive's approach in delivering its priorities under the Programme for Government.

Junior Ministers

Mr Dallat asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what role the junior Ministers have in relation to children and young people.

(AQO 887/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Junior Ministers have responsibility for the co-ordination of policy which impacts on children's and young people's lives and their role is to ensure these issues remain high on Government's agenda.

To achieve this, they jointly chair the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People which has been established by the Executive. The Sub-Committee has identified and is taking forward six key priority areas for action.

The Junior Ministers are also driving forward implementation of the 10-Year Strategy for Children and Young People. They chair a Strategy Planning and Review Group, which includes key statutory, voluntary and community sector representatives, who are working on the next three year strategy action plan.

The Junior Ministers have a twelve month work plan, a key aspect of which is leading engagement by the Executive with children and young people, and hearing their views and opinions. As part of this role, they hosted a Youth Debate on anti-social behaviour in the Assembly on 23 October with 140 young people aged between 11 and 17. This event was ground breaking as it was the first time this Chamber had been used in this way. The event was a great success with Junior Ministers actively engaging with the young people and taking away their ideas and suggestions for further consideration.

The Junior Ministers will also be meeting with the OFMDFM Committee on 5th November 2008 to discuss their work plan and a range of issues concerning Children and Young People. This will include the work of the Ministerial Sub-Committee and the draft children and young people's strategy action plan.

Executive Meetings

Mr Kennedy asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what emergency procedures exist to cope with the situation that has arisen because

of the inability of the Executive to meet since June.

(AQO 824/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The procedure set out in paragraph 2.14 of the Ministerial Code enables any Minister to seek agreement to a decision which is required to be taken so urgently as not to be able to await consideration at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Public Service Agreement

Dr McDonnell asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how it will deliver on PSA 21, enabling efficient government, when the Executive has not met for over 3 months. (AQO 928/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

OFMDFM has lead responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery across relevant departments of PSA 21. In that capacity, OFMDFM has worked closely with contributing departments to develop a detailed Delivery Agreement to ensure the successful achievement of the objectives, commitments and targets set out in PSA 21. As a result, all targets set out under PSA 21 for OFMDFM are on track for achievement.

Conflict Transformation Centre

Mr McCallister asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for the expected cost of the Conflict Transformation Centre at the Maze.

(AQO 851/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The estimated capital cost for the proposed International Centre for Conflict Transformation as outlined in the 2006 Masterplan for Maze/Long Kesh is £10.2m. This is very much a broad order of cost pending detailed specification and design, and would require updating.

Business Awaiting Consideration by Executive

Dr Farry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for its assessment of the scale and scope of outstanding business awaiting consideration by the Executive.

(AQO 878/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

Ministers have brought forward a number of matters for consideration by the Executive. However, it is not our practice to disclose details of Executive business. The content of Executive papers, including draft papers, is confidential.

Strategic Review of the Parades Commission

Mr Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on its response to the interim consultative report by the Strategic Review of the Parades Commission. (AQO 847/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:
We have met with Lord Ashdown and members of the Strategic Review of Parading Body Commission about the interim consultative report on the 6 October 2008 and we will consider their recommendations when the final report is published.

Capital and Revenue Projects

Ms J McCann asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions it has had with all Departments to ensure they bring forward their capital and revenue projects to secure jobs and help alleviate the financial difficulties in households and businesses in the present economic downturn. (AQO 902/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:
The Executive is determined to deliver the Investment Strategy to the fullest extent possible within the constraints of the funding available to us.

We are exploring urgently with departments, the Strategic Investment Board and others how the Executive can maximise the pace of delivery of the Investment Strategy over the Budget period.

Emerald Fund

Mr Neeson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide an update on the Emerald Fund. (AQO 879/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

To date the Emerald Fund has not been accessed in relation to public sector projects.

The fund is not an additional resource that can be used by departments to increase their net spending power. Whilst it is potentially another source of monies for the private sector alongside established commercial options used to finance infrastructure projects, it cannot be used to increase the expenditure allocations contained in the Budget.

We understand that the Emerald Fund's interests include areas of infrastructure provision that fall within the private sector such as energy and telecommunications.

NI Bureau in Washington

Mr Burnside asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what contact it has had with the NI Bureau in Washington on the impact of the credit crunch on US inward investment in Northern Ireland. (AQO 826/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:
The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is in close contact with the Northern Ireland Bureau and InvestNI on the current economic situation and its potential impact on inward investment from the United States (US). The Bureau recently facilitated a visit by Junior Minister Donaldson and Junior Minister Kelly to the US during which they had the opportunity to meet with a range of key interests in the corporate and business sectors and to discuss the current economic situation and its potential impact on inward investment. The Ministers used the opportunity to promote Northern Ireland as an investment location and the advantages for US based companies and investors doing business here. The Bureau will continue to work closely with InvestNI in monitoring developments.

Post-Primary Education

Mr Storey asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Executive will take a decision on the future of post-primary education. (AQO 853/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:
It is not possible at this time to indicate when the Executive will take a decision on the future of post-primary education.

Credit Crunch

Mr Burns asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the contribution it has made to alleviate the impact of the credit crunch. (AQO 871/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: To date we have hosted a series of 'Cost of Living' meetings with the Banking, Construction, Business and Energy sectors as well as the Utility Regulator and Trade Unions to gather information on the impact of the present difficult financial situation on local social and economic interests. We also are meeting with representatives from the Social and Voluntary sector. These meetings have proved to be useful in providing a forum for each sector to give us their view on where difficulties exist and to discuss how we can best protect local interests in the current adverse economic conditions.

We would anticipate completing our series of stakeholder meetings over the next few weeks. We are currently consolidating a paper on the issues raised during these meetings as well as tracking initiatives already put forward by Executive Ministers. We hope to put a consolidated paper to the Executive in November. The complexities of the economic crisis do not allow simple or quick fixes. This is an issue we will need to keep under review as it develops, and tailor our responses appropriately. For this reason we are keen to see this matter as a standing item of Executive business.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Electronic Identification Tagging

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the future of the sheep industry if electronic identification tagging is introduced. (AQW 1505/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): I understand and appreciate the challenges that our sheep industry will face in successfully implementing a system of electronic identification for sheep. However, we must introduce an electronic identification system from 31 December 2009, as it is an obligation under EU law.

While electronic identification will help to reduce the cost of any future disease outbreak insofar as it will help secure effective traceability there is no question that it will also place a financial burden on keepers, as electronic tags are slightly more expensive than conventional ear tags, and some keepers will also need to purchase electronic readers. I would, however, point out that for many of our keepers electronic identification of sheep could be as simple as applying electronic tags and recording information manually. Under EU legislation, keepers have a choice of whether they wish to record information electronically, or not.

We have secured several transitional arrangements through lobbying the Commission, which will phase in individual recording requirements between 2010 and 2012. These changes will allow further time for the industry to adapt to the new arrangements and will help to reduce the record keeping burden, particularly with regard to older animals which are not electronically identified. Discussions on other technical aspects are also ongoing.

Electronic identification of sheep can deliver on-farm benefits by not only reducing the risk of human error in recording animal details, but by providing efficiency

benefits in farm management and animal breeding for keepers who are able to adopt on-farm software and electronic sheep handling equipment. Electronic identification provides the potential to modernise farms and make record keeping easier. I have made funding available for this under the Farm Modernisation Measure of the NI Rural Development Programme.

For the wider industry, there are significant potential benefits that may be realised if we integrate electronic identification with existing APHIS infrastructure in abattoirs and markets, including more effective control of any serious disease outbreak and potential access to higher value markets.

My officials will continue working closely with the authorities in the South and in Britain, and with industry, to identify practical solutions to reduce the burden on keepers and to realise the opportunities that electronic identification represents.

New Technology in Rural Areas

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline what assistance both financial and otherwise, is available for inventors of new technology in rural areas. (AQW 1557/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Measure 3.1 (Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activity) provides £20 million to support members of farm households who wish to diversify into non-agricultural activities, while Measure 3.2 (Micro-business Creation and Development) provides a further £20 million to new or existing micro-businesses in a non-agricultural sector for the creation of employment developing the economic infrastructure in rural areas.

Under these measures, assistance will be available to individuals and private businesses, including the social economy, for projects in rural areas to help new businesses become established or existing businesses to consolidate or expand, including for technical support, bespoke training, capital and resource costs and marketing support. This could include new technologies.

The Axis will be delivered through a bottom-up approach, with local councils working together with Local Action Groups to set priorities for their area. This mechanism will ensure that funding decisions are made by local people, within a competitive process, in line with the priorities set in a locally developed strategy. The Department and its Delivery Agents will also work with other Agencies to assist entrepreneurs to develop the skills for a successful business start-up, thus reducing risks.

In addition I am advised by the Department for Employment and Learning that, while it does not offer any direct financial support for inventors of new technology, in some instances Further Education colleges can offer expertise to mentor and support industries and individuals that are key to the region's development.

Organic Farming Scheme

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to review the level of payment given to farmers under the Organic Farming Scheme contained within the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme. (AQW 1564/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: There are currently no imminent plans to review the level of payment given to farmers within the Organic Farming Scheme.

If a robust economic argument is put forward in relation to any of the proposed payment rates, then my Department will certainly consider it.

Other than that, the Scheme, as part of the NI Rural Development Plan, will be looked at again within the Programme's 2010 mid-term review.

Red Meat Industry Task Force Report

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much money has been sought by her Department for the red meat industry, following the publication of the Red Meat Industry Task Force Report. (AQW 1565/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I would like first of all to put this issue in context. Significant funding is already available to the sector. The Single Farm Payment which is available up to 2013 at least provides direct funding to farmers and represents substantial transitional support to underpin the sector. This is important and provides the industry with a good opportunity to address the need for change.

Whilst I appreciate that there are significant challenges facing the red meat industry and I know that it would like additional support, the reality is that there is a finite pot of money. Nevertheless as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review my Department has put in bids totalling £15m Capital Grant in respect of 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11, to implement any schemes which may arise from the recommendations of the Task Force Report. To date we have not been successful on this front but that does not deter our willingness and commitment to support the industry. Consequently a further bid for £5m was recently submitted to DFP as part of their Strategic Stocktake

review in respect of 2009/10 and 2010/11 for potential capital grant schemes to support the red meat industry.

I also wish to advise that the industry receives significant support from Government through AFBI and CAFRE. In addition, other funds are available to it under the Rural Development Programme.

Dairy Products

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with (i) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and (ii) other devolved administrations in the United Kingdom, to lobby the European Union on the reintroduction of export refunds on dairy products. (AQW 1566/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: A key issue relating to this topic is that fact the 2003 CAP reform agreement introduced a dairy premium and additional payment payable annually to producers (now incorporated in the Single Farm Payment). Whilst this aspect of the agreement was welcomed by producers, the quid pro quo measure was a reduction in intervention prices. The overall aim was to bring EU prices closer to world market prices and to reduce the need for export refunds. This means that the Commission is obliged to adhere to the CAP Reform agreement and accordingly cannot artificially support prices for milk powders above intervention prices.

I note that the data presented at the last meeting of the EU Management Committee confirmed that EU milk powder prices were above intervention prices. In view of this Member States did not have a sound basis to request the Commission to reintroduce export refunds and I understand that in the interim prices have remained above intervention levels.

Whilst I share the industry's concern about the current weak markets for milk powders, I trust that you will appreciate that it would not be appropriate at this stage to use valuable negotiating capital with other Agriculture Departments on this issue. That said, I can assure you that the situation is being carefully monitored and, if necessary, I will lobby strongly with the Secretary of State for DEFRA to ensure that the North's circumstances are fully taken into account.

Since the 2003 CAP Reform our dairy industry has been at a crossroad. When it became clear that export refunds would play a much less significant role in returns for dairy products some processors took steps to move to the processing of higher added value products. I welcome this development and would encourage all processors to follow a market-led approach by moving away from basic commodity production to higher value products. Only in this way will the dairy industry reduce its vulnerability

to volatile world markets and continue to make an important contribution to the local agri-food industry.

Compensation for Farmers

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what conacre payments will be included within any scheme to compensate farmers, after the flooding on 16 August 2008. (AQW 1567/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: There is currently no compensation available or reimbursement for crop or other losses. However, I have agreed in principle to the payment of a one-off hardship payment under EC de minimis rules (not based on specific cost elements) to those farmers affected by the flooding on 16 August, subject to affordability and business case considerations. I intend to make my assessment available to the Executive in order to secure the support of Ministerial colleagues on the way forward.

Wind Energy for Rural Businesses Scheme

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what criteria were used to appoint personnel to carry out the review of the Wind Energy for Rural Businesses scheme. (AQW 1568/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The identification of personnel to conduct the review was based on the desire for the appointee to have knowledge and experience of European Funding and the Rural Development Programme, but with no connection past or present with the administration or implementation of the WERB Scheme. The individual chosen to lead the review meets these criteria and also has had experience of audit work. He is currently employed within the Central Services Group in the Department. He was assisted in this task by individuals within his own Branch and Service Delivery Group, together with a professional engineer who was appointed to assess the technical and contractual aspects of the WERB Scheme.

Single Farm Payment

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payment decisions, determined by Independent Review Panels (i) in favour of the appellant; and (ii) in favour of her Department, were overthrown by her since taking up office. (AQW 1581/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The External Panel do not make decisions in relation to the Single Farm Payment scheme. Their remit is to provide an external view of my Department's decisions and make a recommendation. The final decision in relation to Stage 2 of the Review of Decisions process rests with my Department.

Since taking office, 104 decisions in relation to Single Farm Payment Stage 2 Review of Decisions applications have been made. Of these 99 Panel recommendations have been accepted and are broken down as follows:

- 89 cases which the Panel recommended should be rejected,
- 5 cases which the Panel recommended should be upheld, and
- 5 cases which the Panel recommended should be partially upheld.

In the remaining 5 cases, the Panel recommended that 4 should be upheld, these recommendations were not accepted. In 1 case the Panel recommended that the case should be rejected, this case was upheld in part.

Purchased Cattle

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to remove the 30 day holding rule for purchased cattle; and to detail the benefits of this rule to the agriculture industry. (AQW 1582/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I have no plans to remove the 30 day restriction on imported cattle, which is a vital component in our efforts to prevent bluetongue entering and becoming established here.

With the exception of the South, which is free from bluetongue, certain conditions apply in the case of cattle and sheep imported from any area of GB and mainland Europe to ensure good biosecurity is achieved and that the animal is not affected by bluetongue.

Animals imported for breeding and production are required to be isolated; housed in a house which has been cleansed, disinfected and treated with insecticide; and restricted until they have two clear bluetongue tests.

In the case of cattle these tests are carried out around 7 and 30 days post import; and for sheep at around 15 days and 30 days. Anyone intending to import animals is made aware of these conditions in advance and is provided with advice on biosecurity. We undertake these measures in order to protect the agriculture industry here from bluetongue.

The current veterinary risk assessment states that the greater threat of bluetongue coming here is from the importation of infected animals. The recent cases of bluetongue infected animals imported to England and Wales from Europe demonstrates that this threat is very real.

It is because of this risk that I have repeatedly encouraged the industry not to import stock from high risk areas. It is also why I have put in place measures to allow us to quickly identify any infected animals imported and reduce the risk of spreading infection to neighbouring flocks and herds.

Rivers Agency

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the work carried out by the Rivers Agency, as a result of the floods during the summer, in (i) Moyle District Council area; (ii) Ballymoney Borough Council area; and (iii) Ballymena Borough Council area; and to detail the associated costs of the work undertaken.

(AQW 1633/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As a result of the extreme flooding event experienced on 16 and 17 August 2008 the Rivers Agency has to date carried out emergency repair to existing flood defences and removal of debris works totalling £12,750 in the Moyle District Council area, £3,000 in the Ballymoney Borough Council area and £11,750 in the Ballymena Borough Council area. Further to this, repair works following flood damage are ongoing and the Agency is in the process of commissioning a number of studies throughout all affected areas.

Feasibility Studies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many feasibility studies have been carried out, following the flooding during the summer, in (i) Moyle District Council area; (ii) Ballymoney Borough Council area; and (iii) Ballymena Borough Council area.

(AQW 1634/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: DARD Rivers Agency has not yet completed any feasibility studies in the Moyle, Ballymoney or Ballymena Council areas relating to the flooding on 16 and 17 August 2008. Such studies are by their nature complex and far reaching, and may take some time to complete.

The Agency has been very active in all areas affected by the widespread and extreme flooding experienced on 16 August 2008. It has been investigating

all watercourse-related flooding incidents of which it has been aware. Where rapid and practical solutions to flooding problems have been achievable, the Agency has completed such works. And where other minor works have been required, the Agency has, where possible, carried out such works in order to alleviate the risk of future flooding.

With regard to more extensive flooding problems the Agency has commissioned studies relating to several of the locations affected by the flooding. Furthermore, it is in the process of commissioning a large number of studies throughout all the remaining affected areas.

The Agency recognises that there have been flooding problems within the 3 Council areas mentioned and is committed to resolving problems for which there is a cost-effective solution. It will address these in due course as resources permit.

Farming Industry

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide provisional cost estimates of damage caused by flooding on 16 August 2008 to the farming industry in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 1747/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am unable to provide a cost breakdown for the Upper Bann constituency area. However, for the Upper Bann and Lagan river catchment areas the estimated losses are £97,000, and £66,000 in respect of potatoes and cereals. These figures are based on input costs.

Forest Service

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of new hectares of forestry planted by Forest Service, each year since 1970.[R]

(AQW 1748/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Details of annual Forest Service new planting from 1973 to March 2008 are shown in the table below. No records of planting from 1970 to 1973 are held.

FOREST SERVICE NEW PLANTING

Year	Hectares of New Planting
1973 - 1974	1492
1974 - 1975	1063
1975 - 1976	977

Year	Hectares of New Planting
1976 - 1977	998
Apr to Dec 1977	968
1977 -1978	945
1978 - 1979	715
1979 - 1980	714
1980 - 1981	641
1981 - 1982	720
1982 - 1983	638
1983 - 1984	628
1984 - 1985	725
1985 - 1986	638
1986 - 1987	568
1987 - 1988	585
1988 - 1989	623
1989 - 1990	561
1990 - 1991	600
1991 - 1992	426
1992 - 1993	422
1993 - 1994	365
1994 - 1995	296
1995 - 1996	158
1996 - 1997	140
1997 - 1998	94
1998 - 1999	112
1999 - 2000	196
2000 - 2001	87
2001 - 2002	61
2002 - 2003	79
2003 - 2004	89
2004 - 2005	13
2005 - 2006	14
2006 - 2007	0
2007 - 2008	15

Total: 17,366 hectares

Forest Service

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of new hectares of short rotation coppice planted by the Forest Service, each year since 1995. (AQW 1750/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Forest Service has not planted any Short Rotation Coppice.

Flood Damage

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to her answer to AQW 833/09, when she will conclude her consideration of funding options available following her Department's assessment of flood damage to the river catchment areas of (i) Moyola; (ii) Lagan; (iii) Upper Bann; (iv) Blackwater; (v) Maine; and (vi) Sixmilewater.

(AQW 1760/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I have agreed in principle to the payment of a one – off hardship payment under EC de minimis rules to those farmers affected by the flooding on 16 August, subject to affordability and business case considerations. I intend to make my assessment available shortly to the Executive in order to secure the support of Ministerial colleagues on the way forward.

Rivers Agency

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions officials from the Rivers Agency had with local farmers in relation to the Clea Lakes in Killyleagh; and to detail any agreements reached. (AQW 1772/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Rivers Agency officials have not met with farmers to reach any agreement about the Clea Lakes. At the request of parties who had declared an interest Rivers Agency met to explain where responsibility lay for the control of lake levels and how Rivers Agency may consider taking over control if there was satisfactory legal transfer of rights from the current owners. There has been no legal transfer to date.

Tree Felling Licences

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on the introduction of tree felling licenses. (AQW 1795/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: On 19 June 2008, the Executive Committee agreed that a new Forestry Bill could be drafted to replace the Forestry Act (NI) 1953. The Forestry Bill will contain a provision to regulate the felling and regeneration of woodlands by means of a felling licence. Formal, detailed instructions will be issued to the Office of the Legislative Counsel shortly.

It is anticipated that the Bill will be ready for introduction to the Assembly in March/April 2009, most likely after the Easter recess.

Forestry Policy

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will revisit 'Northern Ireland, A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth', to address all strategic issues that affect forestry policy, including (i) the protection and restoration of ancient woodland; (ii) climate change and its impact on woodland; and (iii) how government can deliver native woodland creation to benefit both the public and wildlife.

(AQW 1828/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I am content that NI Forestry: A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth reflects an appropriate balance between the many views which were expressed during the policy review, and has settled future forest policy.

The Strategy does not contain some of the details which you seek, but is a high level document which points to how the agreed policy will be taken forward. The Strategy does indicate that Forest Service will consider drawing up more focussed strategies, in consultation with stakeholders, and as part of its normal business cycle.

Forest Service developed recently a strategy for the management of Departmental woodland identified on the ancient woodland inventory. Management of this woodland will be reviewed in conjunction with Forest Service periodic review of forest plans, based on the ecological potential of the woodland, indicated by the presence or absence of ancient woodland remnant features, and features which reinforce habitat networks. This assessment will form the basis of whether and where to restore a site to native woodland.

In relation to evidence on impact of climate change on forestry, Forest Service engages with a wide range of organisations such as the Scottish and NI Forum For Environmental Research (SNIFFER), COFORD (National Council for Forest Research and Development), WWF and Forestry Commission in relation to research and the communication of research findings in this emerging field.

Forest Service provides grant aid and advice to help landowners create new native woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. This is guided by the publication earlier this year by Forest Service of the Native Woodland definitions and Guidance booklet, produced by the Native Woodland Group. The booklet provides important information in relation to native species, native woodland, new native woodland, local provenance and the use of

natural colonisation as a means of creating new native woodland. Forest Service also monitors the creation of grant-aided new native woodland by priority woodland type and updates the Native Woodland Group and the NI Biodiversity Report. Between 1999 and 2006, 571 hectares of new native woodland were created under the WGS and native woodland is becoming an increasingly popular option for those creating new woodlands.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that Northern Ireland is the least wooded region of Europe, what plans Forest Service has to increase on woodland creation; and what financial incentives are available to private landowners.

(AQW 1831/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The Forest Service "Strategy for Sustainability and Growth", published in March 2006, identified forest expansion as a key policy aim and stated the aim of doubling the area of forest in the North over a 50 year period. New planting will be achieved primarily through the conversion of privately owned agricultural land, supported by funds made available under the Rural Development Programme. The Strategy recognised that farmers have a strong commitment to farming which means that forest expansion is likely to be slow at first, however, my Department is committed to a programme of encouraging woodland expansion.

In addition to provision of planting grants, Forest Service has introduced a Publicity and Marketing Strategy to highlight the benefits of woodland ownership, produced an indicative map showing where new woodland could be potentially the best long term land use and will carry out a study identifying the main barriers affecting expansion and how these may be overcome.

The establishment of new woodland is primarily encouraged through two grant schemes: the Woodland Grant Scheme and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. New planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme is grant aided at a rate of up to £1850 per hectare for areas of 0.2 hectare and over, paid in two instalments.

In addition to the Woodland Grant Scheme, farmers may receive annual payments through the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme to compensate for agricultural income foregone by creating woodland. Each application must be for at least one hectare and payments are made for either 10 or 15 years, depending on the trees planted and how they will be managed.

The rates of annual payment range from £60 - £270 per hectare depending on the category of land being planted and whether it falls inside or outside the Less Favoured Areas (LFA).

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to afford absolute legislative protection to all ancient and long established woodland. (AQW 1833/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has no plans to afford absolute legislative protection to all ancient and long established woodland.

At present, proposal to change woodland to another land use, not subject to a planning permission process, are covered by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations (NI) 2006. However, a new Forestry Bill to replace the Forestry Act (NI) 1953 is currently being drafted, which will contain a provision to regulate the felling and regeneration of woodlands by means of a licence.

The licence will compel forest owners to manage woodlands in a sustainable manner, including the timing and extent of felling, and the composition of regenerating woodlands. A consideration for any such licence will be whether the woodland in question appears on the ancient woodland inventory.

The new Forestry Bill should be ready for introduction to the Assembly in March/April 2009, most likely after the Easter recess.

Likewise the Department of Environment's Planning and Environmental Policy Group (PEPG) has no plans to bring forward legislative protection for ancient and long-established woodland.

However, PEPG is currently considering how to bring forward policy protection to ancient and long-established woodland from development proposals as part of the review of Planning Policy Statement 2: Planning and Nature Conservation.

Currently, in considering whether or not to grant planning permission the Department of the Environment's Planning Service will have regard to the ancient woodlands inventory map as one of a number of material planning considerations.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will restore all planted ancient woodland sites under the Forest Service's stewardship, as part of the commitment to arrest biodiversity decline. (AQW 1834/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The Department cannot restore all plantations on ancient woodland sites because there is insufficient evidence of an economic, social or

environmental requirement for such a target and there are no clearly defined means by which such a target could be achieved. However, the Department accepts the principle of restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites and has recently developed a strategy for the management of ancient woodland identified on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Woodland Inventory published in 2007.

Management of this woodland is reviewed in conjunction with Forest Service plans, based on the presence, or absence, of ancient woodland remnant features and features which reinforce habitat networks.

Environmental and Rural Development Fund

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to (i) confirm that on 27 February 2006 the Northern Ireland Secretary of State launched a £59.2m Environmental and Rural Development Fund; and (ii) provide a breakdown of how her Department directed this allocation. (AQW 1903/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: In February 2006, the NI Secretary Of State launched a £59.2m Environmental and Renewable Energy Fund (EREF). This was a two-year fund managed by DETI to pump-prime the adoption of renewable energy technologies in an attempt to stimulate the market. This Fund should not be confused with the funding to support the NI Rural Development Plan.

I understand that you have asked a similar question to DETI and they will be able to provide a breakdown as to how the total fund was allocated.

However, you may wish to note DARD was successful in a number of bids from the EREF, totalling £4.2 million over the two year period namely:-

- Funding for the creation of a renewable energy centre of excellence within the DARD estate at the Hillsborough site of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute. Capital costs of £0.995m in 2006/07 and £1.35m in 2007/08.
- Funding for research and development in renewable energy technologies. Revenue of £0.5m in 2006/07 and £0.75m 2007/08.
- Funding for CAFRE to take forward a technology transfer programme on renewable energy programmes to increase awareness of sustainable issues among the rural community and enhance its knowledge to exploit the opportunities that currently exist. Revenue of £0.1m in 2006/07 and £0.15m in 2007/08.

- Establishment of demonstration projects within CAFRE at a capital cost of £0.2m in 2006/07 and £0.15m in 2007/08.

Tree Felling Licences

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she has any plans to introduce tree felling licences. (AQW 1909/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: On 19 June 2008, the Executive Committee agreed that a new Forestry Bill could be drafted to replace the Forestry Act (NI) 1953. The Forestry Bill will contain a provision to regulate the felling and regeneration of woodlands by means of a felling licence. Formal, detailed instructions will be issued to the Office of the Legislative Counsel shortly.

It is anticipated that the Bill will be ready for introduction to the Assembly in March/April 2009, most likely after the Easter recess.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development since 35% of the planted ancient woodlands sites are in private ownership, what plans her Department has to increase financial incentives for restoring these sites. (AQW 1911/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: Although a significant proportion of planted ancient woodland sites are in private ownership, this in itself does not create a need to alter the arrangements under which the Department supports private forestry.

Based on the results of the 2007 Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), the majority of privately owned planted AWI woodland already consists of broadleaved or mixed conifer-broadleaved woodland. Within this kind of mixed woodland type, the extent to which ancient woodland features, including native woodland ground flora and veteran trees, are under threat from shading, is generally quite low.

While there are no plans to increase the levels of incentives available to private landowners, that are specifically for restoration of Ancient Woodlands, the Department already provides support under a number of forestry and agri-environment grant schemes that are also applicable to these sites

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will commit to creating a

national inventory of all woodland sites to measure the success of the target to double woodland cover contained within the 2006 forestry strategy for sustainability and growth. (AQW 1912/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: Forest Service maintains an accurate and detailed inventory of woodland managed by the Department and updates this on an annual basis. Currently this covers approximately 70% of forest area in the North. The basis for determining the area of non-Forest Service woodland comes from a private woodland inventory carried out by Forest Service in the late 1970s. This is periodically updated to take account of new areas of woodland created under Woodland Grant Schemes.

Forest Service acknowledge some limitations in the current approach, particularly the estimates around new private woodland created outside forestry grant schemes. Forest Service will consider using other available woodland information to provide more comprehensive inventory data, allowing changes in woodland cover over the long term to be more fully captured.

Woodland

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the target in the Programme for Government does not commit to the figure of 17,400 hectares of new woodland planted annually, to double woodland cover. (AQW 1915/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: Doubling our woodland cover will require an additional 86,000 hectares of woodland to be created over the next 50 years, primarily by conversion of privately owned agricultural land to woodland with support provided under the Rural Development Programme.

The Forestry Strategy acknowledges a strong desire among farmers to continue farming, which means that woodland expansion is likely to be slow at first and hence the Programme for Government targets were set at 1,650 hectares over a three year period at the rate of 550 hectares per year. In the longer term, as the reform of CAP gains momentum and growing more woodland becomes attractive to landowners it is anticipated that the demand for forestry grant schemes will increase.

The target of 1650 ha recognises the likely rate of afforestation in the current circumstances and that expected within the programme for Government period.

Compensation for Crops Lost

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the discussions she

has had with the Ulster Farmers' Union to provide compensation for crops lost in the Strangford constituency, due to bad weather. (AQW 1975/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I met with the Ulster Farmers Union (UFU) on 21 August in the aftermath of the severe flooding of 16 August to discuss the way forward in terms of assessing damage on farms. I have had no discussions with UFU specific to the Strangford constituency.

New Clondeboy Yoghurt

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she is aware of the new Clondeboy Yoghurt; and what practical and financial assistance her Department has given to promote this new business. (AQW 1976/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I am aware of the new Clondeboy Estate yoghurt and met some of those involved with the business at the 2007 NI. Food & Drink Association Awards.

My Department, through the College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) at Loughry Campus, provided significant practical assistance to Clondeboy Estate to develop its yoghurt products. The yoghurts were initially manufactured at Loughry under its Pre-Incubation Programme and test marketed. Loughry continues to provide technical support and staff training for the business.

At the invitation of my Department, the company participated in a prestigious 'Slowfood' event in Belfast in May 2007, promoting artisan food producers and their products.

The Company has also received advice from the Department on the financial assistance available under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and has recently made an application to the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme.

International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the cost to her Department of co-sponsoring the International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition, hosted by Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute Conference on 29 and 30 October 2008 at the Slieve Donard Hotel. (AQW 2113/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development agreed to host a pre-conference

dinner at which I presented the Departmental policy on renewable energy. The final cost of this dinner is not yet available, but is estimated to be approximately £2,000. As part of this sponsorship arrangement, the Department's College for Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) was also provided with exhibition space at the Conference free of charge to promote its work in renewables.

Rose Energy and Invest NI

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she and her officials were aware that her Department was co-sponsoring an event, in partnership with Rose Energy and Invest NI, organised by Morrow Communications who are working as public relations consultants for Rose Energy. (AQW 2114/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: DARD was aware that both Rose Energy and Invest NI were two of seven sponsors of the AFBI International Renewable Energy Conference and that Morrow Communications was engaged to provide event management services. This was an international scientific conference looking at a range of renewable energy technologies. AFBI procured event management services through a robust public procurement exercise. The event management services did not include sponsorship raising activities.

I am aware of the Rose Energy proposal for a chicken litter incinerator. Whilst the decision relating to planning approval for this project rests with another Department, it is on public record that I would support a public enquiry into this matter so that the views of farmers, local residents and all those potentially affected by this development are taken into consideration.

International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if there is a conflict of interest in relation to her Department's co-sponsorship of the International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition, because of the involvement of Invest NI, Rose Energy and Morrow Communications, who are organising the conference and working as public relations consultants for Rose Energy on its incinerator proposal. (AQW 2115/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development: I am not aware of any conflict of interest in relation to DARD's sponsorship of the pre-conference dinner at AFBI International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition due to the involvement of Invest NI, Rose Energy and

Morrow Communications. The appointment by AFBI of Morrow Communications as the event management company for the Conference was managed by a centre of procurement excellence, with a specific focus on methodology, experience and costs during the procurement process. Morrow Communications had no responsibility for raising sponsorship.

Sponsorship services were awarded to another consultancy company on the basis of a separate public procurement exercise.

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Commemorations of the Plantation of Ulster

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans have been made for the upcoming commemorations of the Plantation of Ulster.

(AQW 1461/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): A number of organisations supported by my Department are involved in facilitating a variety of activities in relation to the Plantation of Ulster. These include a documentary series, exhibitions, and the publication of educational resources.

Receptions Hosted By Minister

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list all the receptions he has hosted, since taking up office.

(AQW 1478/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I have hosted 8 receptions since taking up office. These are outlined below.

- Senior International Series of Women's Bowls
- 50 Years of International Football in Northern Ireland
- ICC World Twenty20 Qualifying Tournament
- Linfield Football Club
- World Blind Golf Championship
- Manenberg and Langa Junior Hockey Team
- ESPN Emerald Hoops Classic Basketball Tournament
- Northern Ireland Olympic and Paralympic Athletes at the 2008 Beijing Games

Sports Pitches and Facilities

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what his Department is doing to encourage

sports clubs to cooperate with schools to share sports pitches and facilities.

(AQW 1506/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), is currently developing a new 10 year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland. A draft of this Strategy, which was published for consultation in October 2007, contains proposals for encouraging sports clubs to collaborate with schools and the education sector on the sharing of sports facilities. The Budget 2008/2011 is informed by the priorities set out within this draft Strategy and provides a total of £145.3 million for sport over the next 3 years.

The Department of Education also considers that children and young people can benefit greatly from developing their physical literacy skills and participating in sporting activities. The Department's curriculum sports programme provides additional opportunities to do so for our youngest primary school children, and it welcomes opportunities for co-operation between schools and sporting bodies where this is possible.

Through the Extended Schools programme the Department of Education is seeking to establish each extended school as the hub of its local community engaging positively and actively with neighbouring schools, statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations in an effort to meet the needs of the pupils in the school, their families and the wider community as a whole. DE is therefore keen to encourage greater community use of school premises when not otherwise required by the school, including improved access to school sports pitches and facilities.

In addition, where feasible, the Department of Education seeks to encourage school authorities to consider shared sports facilities when examining options for major capital works.

Library Buildings and Mobile Libraries

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the provision for library buildings and mobile libraries, in the Upper Bann constituency and Southern Education and Library board area.

(AQW 1595/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has 23 branch libraries serving a population of approximately 385,000. The Board also provides mobile library services with 213 stops provided by four vehicles mainly on a fortnightly basis, with some weekly stops. Supporting these services are 2 housebound mobile libraries providing 356 stops across the SELB area calling mainly with individuals as well as old people's homes and day centres, generally on a three weekly basis.

The public library service provides a range of services including book lending, free internet access and homework clubs.

Within the Upper Bann constituency there are 5 Branch Libraries, namely: Lurgan, Portadown, Brownlow, Banbridge and Gilford. A full list of the mobile stops in the Southern Board area is attached.

HOUSEBOUND MOBILES – INDIVIDUAL CALLS IN AREAS LISTED

Week		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
One	Ssm1	Glenanne Forkhill Meigh Bessbrook Mountnorris	Markethill Whitecross Newry Warrenpoint	Poyntzpass Loughbrickland Newry Jerrettspass	Mountnorris Bessbrook Newry Rathfriland	Mayobridge Hilltown Rathfriland Ballyward Katesbridge
	Ssm2	Off	Armagh Edenaveys	Hamiltonsbawn Craigavon Lurgan Battlehill	Armagh Milford	Ferla Mullaghbawn Crossmaglen Cullyhanna Newtownhamilton
Two	Ssm1	Portadown Lurgan	Portadown	Kilkeel Annalong	TaNDragee Lurgan Waringstown Gilford	Lurgan
	Ssm2	Donaghmore Galbally Pomeroy Newmills Coalisland Derrylaughan Tamnamore	Loup Arboe Coagh Moneymore Churchtown Lissan	Kinnego Charlemont Moy Moygashel Benburb Tullysarron	Keady Tassagh Granemore Foley Markethill	Killylea Tynan Aughnacloy Agher Clogher Fivemiletown Ballygawley Dergenagh Greystone Dyan
Three	Ssm1	Off	Banbridge	Dromore Banbridge	Lurgan	Newry Rostrevor Kilkeel
	Ssm2	Middletown Newtownhamilton Ballymacnab	Cookstown The Rock	Portadown Aforey Richill	DuNgannon Donaghmore Castlecaulfield	Loughgall Killyman/Bush Ballynakelly Birches Salters Grange

M2 DRAFT TIMETABLE, MARCH 2007

Monday 1	
Ballyards	10.00 - 10.30
Darkley	11.00 - 11.30
(Taylor Cottages)	
Granemore	11.40 – 12.00
Lunch	

Ballymoyer	1.30 – 3.00
Lisadian-Mrs XXX	3.15 – 3.25
Whitecross	3.40 – 4.40
Mrs XXXX	4.45 – 5.00
Tuesday 1	
Out	
Ballygasson	11.00 – 11.30

Tullyroan	11.45 – 12.30
Lunch	
Blackwatertown	2.15 – 5.00
Back	
Wednesday 1	
Out	
Banbridge- HB stops:	
Pinley Green	10.45 – 11.00
(Castlewellan Rd)	
Iveagh Dr	11.10 – 11.20
Newry Rd	11.30 – 11.45
Katesbridge	12.15 – 12.45
Lunch	
Millstone Close	1.50 – 2.05
(Moneyslane)	
Ballyward	2.15 – 2.30
Leitrim	2.40 – 2.50
Gransha XXXXX	3.20 – 3.35
Back	
Thursday 1	
Out	
Tandragee	
HB, Markethill Rd	11.45 – 12.00
Clare (near PS)	12.15 – 12.45
Lunch	
Tandragee	
HB Ballylisk Lane	1.30 – 1.45
HB Mullavilly	1.50 – 2.05
Ahorey (Wallace Car Sales)	2.15 – 2.45
Ahorey Sunset Hill	3.00 – 3.30
Edenavey's Estate	4.30 – 5.00
Back	
Friday 1	
No service	

Monday 2	
No service, staff in HQ	
Tuesday 2	
Out	
Loughgall Village	12.50 – 1.30

Lunch	
Armagh HB Monaghan Rd	3.15 – 3.25
Madden	3.45 – 4.15
Milford Village	4.30 – 6.00
Back	
Wednesday 2	
Out	
Middletown	
St Louis Convent	12.30 – 12.45
Middletown Village	12.50 – 1.20
Tynan	2.15 – 3.00
Dyan	3.30 – 3.45
Caledon	4.00 – 5.00
Back	
Thursday 2	
Out	
Killylea Village	11.35 – 12.15
Lunch	
Aughnacloy	1.15 – 6.15
Back	
Friday 2	
Out	
Glenanne – Mossfield	10.45 – 11.30
Mountnorris	11.40 – 12.20
Loughgilly	12.30 – 1.00
Lunch	
Hamiltonsbawn Village	2.30 – 5.00
Back	

MOBILE 3 TIMETABLE APRIL 07

Monday 1	
Hilltown	11.00 – 12.00
Mayobridge	12.15 – 1.15
Lunch	
Clontigora	2.15 – 3.15
Clogoghue	3.30 – 5.10
Tuesday 1	
Bessbrook HB	10.45 - 11.30
Camlough 1	11.45 - 12.25
Camlough 2	12.30 - 1.00
Lunch	

Silverbridge	2.00 - 3.00
Tullyvallen	3.15 - 4.00
Altnamackin	4.15 - 4.50
Wednesday 1	
O'Rahilly Pk	10.30 – 10.55
Mullaghbawn M&T	11.00 – 12.00
Conway Pk	12.05 – 12.45
Shean	12.50 – 1.15
Lunch	
Forkhill 1	2.15 – 3.30
Forkhill 2	3.40 – 4.15
Drumintee (Mt View)	4.30 – 5.00
Thursday 1	
XXXXXXX (HB)	10.40 – 10.55
Latt	11.00 – 11.45
Jerrettspass	12.00- 12.30
Lunch	
Poyntzpass	1.30 – 3.30
Aughan Pk	3.35 – 4.15
Lurganare	4.30 – 5.15
Friday 1	
No service	

Monday 2	
Attical	11.15 – 12.00
Ballymartin	12.20 – 1.00
Lunch	
Annalong (HB)	2.00 – 2.15
Opp Surgery	2.20 – 2.40
Majors Hill	2.45 – 3.15
Longstone	3.25 – 3.55
Kilhorne	4.05 – 4.25
Linden Brae	4.30 – 4.45
Tuesday 2	
Drumilly	11.00 – 11.30
Belleeks	11.35 – 1.00
Lunch	
Newtownhamilton	2.00 – 4.45
Wednesday 2	
Jonesboro	11.00 – 1.00

Lunch	
Drumintee	2.00 – 3.00
(St Pat's Pk)	
Meigh 1	3.15 – 4.15
Meigh 2	4.30 – 5.00
Thursday 2	
Greencastle	11.30 – 12.00
Ballymaderphy	12.20 – 1.00
Lunch	
Rostrevor	2.00 – 5.00
Friday 2	
No service	

M5 TIMETABLE, 8TH MARCH 2007

Monday 1	
Out	
Laurelvale	10.30 – 10.50
Mullavilly	10.55 – 11.15
Copeland (HB)	11.30 – 11.45
Gibson's Hill	11.50 – 12.10
Robinstown	1.30 – 1.45
Cozy Corner(Birches)	1.50 – 2.15
Eglish	2.25 – 2.45
Ardress	3.05 – 3.25
Taylor Houses	3.35 – 4.00
Cranagill	4.15 – 4.30
Redman's Corner	4.35 – 5.00
Tuesday 1	
Out	
Waringstown	10.30 – 12.30
Lunch	
XXXXXXX	2.00 – 2.30
XXXXXXX	2.35 -2.40
XXXXXXX	2.45 – 3.00
XXXXXXX	3.20 – 3.35
Wednesday 1	
Out	
Bluestone	11.00 – 11.20
Tullylish	11.35 – 11.50
Laurecestown	12.00 – 12.30
Seapatrick	1.00 – 1.25

Lunch	
Woodside	2.45 – 3.00
Loughbrickland	3.05 – 3.20
Clinic, L'brickland	3.25 – 3.50
Moody Park	4.05 – 4.20
Dean's Road	4.40 – 4.55
Bleary	5.00 – 5.15
Back	
Thursday 1	
Out	
Mullabrack	10.30 – 10.45
Markethill;	
Main St	11.00 – 1.00
Lunch	
Day Centre	2.00 – 2.55
Main St	3.15 – 5.45
Back	
Friday 1	
No service	

Monday 2	
Out	
Charlestown	10.25 – 10.40
Derrytrasna	10.50 – 11.05
XXXXXX(HB)	11.20 – 11.35
XXXXXX(HB)	11.40 – 12.00
Lunch	
Beehcote	1.50 – 2.05
Quarry Gds	2.10 – 2.40
Knocknamuckley	2.50 – 3.05
Carrickblacker	3.10 – 3.25
Kensington	3.30 – 3.45
Back	
Tuesday 2	
Out	
Malcolmson Park	10.30 – 10.45
Claredon Park	10.50 – 11.05
Gilpin Park	11.15 - 11.30
XXXXXXXXXX	11.45 – 12.10
Waringstown	12.55 – 5.10
Back	

Wednesday 2	
Out	
Kilmore	10.45 – 11.00
Annahugh Park	11.15 – 11.30
Annahugh Road	11.35 – 11.45
Stewart's Tce	12.05 – 12.20
XXXXXX	12.30 – 12.50
Xxxxxx (HB)	1.00 – 1.15
Lunch	
Battlehill:	
XXXXXXXX	2.20 – 2.40
Derryhale	2.55 – 3.15
Brompton Park	3.25 – 3.45
The Oaks	3.55 – 4.15
Broomhill	4.20 – 4.50
Back	
Thursday 2	
Out	
Lurgan HB:	
Enniskeen	10.05 – 10.20
XXXXXXXX	10.30 – 10.45
XXXXXXXXXX	10.50 – 11.00
XXXXXXXXXX	11.05 – 11.20
XXXXXXXXx	11.25 – 11.40
xxxxxxxxxxX	11.45 – 12.00
Donaghcloney	1.55 – 2.25
Donagh Park	2.30 – 3.00
Killysorrel	3.15 – 3.25
Blackscull	3.30 – 3.40
Spar Shop	3.45 – 4.00
Back	
Friday 2	
Out	
Wolfisland Tce	11.00 – 11.30
Colane	11.45 – 12.00
Lunch	
Loughview	1.40 – 1.55
Bayview	2.05 – 2.20
Gawley's Gate	2.30 – 2.45
Cairnhall	3.00 – 3.10

Aghagallon:	
St Patrick's Ave	3.30 – 3.45
Parknasilla	3.50 – 4.05
Post Office	4.10 – 4.30
Milltown	4.45 – 5.00

MOBILE 4 TIMETABLE**PHONE: 0777 6152568**

Monday 1	
Curglasson	1200 – 1230
Moortown (Public Stop)	1330 – 1415
Pairc na Mona(Housebound) 1425 – 1435	
Coagh	
(Urbal Road Housebound)	1505 – 1520
Coagh	
(Urbal Road Housebound)	1525 – 1540
Coagh (Public Stop)	1545 – 1645
Arrive Dungannon	1730
Tuesday 1	
Fivemiletown	
(Clabby Road Housebound) 1100 – 1115	
Fivemiletown	
(Car-park Housebound)	1120 – 1135
Fivemiletown	
(Screeby Road Housebound) 1145 - 1200	
Ballygawley	1230 - 1300
Ballygawley	1345 - 1630
Arrive Dungannon	1700
Wednesday 1	
Donaghmore	
(Ivybank Park Housebound)	1400 – 1415
Donaghmore	
(Main Street Housebound)	1420 – 1435
Annaghbeg	1445 – 1530
Cappagh	1555 – 1620
Galbally (Beechline)	1630 – 1655
Arrive Dungannon	1715
Thursday 1	
Eglis	11.00 -11.50
Benburb (1) Rookery Drive	12.10-12.30
(2) Main Street	12.35-12.30

Tullysaran	
(Community Centre)	2.00 – 2.30
Milltown (Bottom of Hill)	3.45 – 4.00
Carrickaness	4.10 – 4.30
McCartans Crossroads	4.35 – 5.00
Friday 1	
Cookstown	
(Stewart Ave. Housebound)	1130 – 1145
Cookstown	
(Morgan's Hill Rd. HB	1155 – 1210
Ardboe Lakeview HB	1250 – 1305
Ardboe Lakeview HB	1310 – 1325
Mullinahoe	1405 – 1435
Ballylifford	1505 – 1530
Ballyronan	1545 – 1615
The Loup	1630 – 1715
Moneymore (Riverview HB)	1730 – 1745
Drumullan	1800 – 1815
Arrive Dungannon	1850

Monday 2	
Stewartstown	1030 – 1300
Stewartstown	1345 – 3.00
Killen	3.15 – 3.45
Mullenakill	4.00 – 4.30
Arrive Dungannon	1705
Tuesday 2	
Augher	1115 – 1315
Augher	1400 – 1440
Clogher	1455 – 1645
Arrive Dungannon	1730
Wednesday 2	
Sandholes	1110 – 1130
Tullyhogue	1145 – 1200
Bush	1315 – 1400
Killyman	1415 – 1430
Castlecaulfield	
(Castleview HB)	1500 – 1515
Castlecaulfield Main St.	1520 – 1645
Arrive Dungannon	1705

Thursday 2	
Conway Close	1400 – 1420
Dunamore	
(Opp Mill Wheel PH)	1430 – 1500
Rock	1535 – 1610
Pomeroy (Main Street HB1)	1630 – 1645
Pomeroy (Main Street HB2)	1650 – 1705
Pomeroy (The Diamond)	1710 – 1800
Arrive Dungannon	1830
HB (Housebound)	

Note: XXXXXXXX indicates housebound individuals whose address details have been removed for data protection purposes.

2012 Olympic Games

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action he is taking to promote canoeing and rowing in preparation for the Olympics in 2012. (AQW 1610/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Responsibility for promoting canoeing and rowing in preparation for the 2012 London Olympic Games rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sports, the Canoeing Association of Northern Ireland and the Ulster Branch, Irish Amateur Rowing Union.

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), however, which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding, has provided financial assistance to the sports over the last three financial years as follows:

CANOEING

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Lottery	28,230	5,340	10,240
Exchequer	46,161	127,082*	40,938
Totals	74,391	132,422	51,178

ROWING

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Lottery	26,150	31,000	29,640
Exchequer	-	39,514*	-
Totals	26,150	70,514	29,640

* The Exchequer funding awarded in 2006/07 in each case relates to the three year funding period 2006-2009.

In addition to this, an application for canoeing and rowing has been made by Portadown 2000 under the

Elite Facilities Capital Programme. This is currently under consideration by SNI.

The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland has also been supported by SNI to organise and run a talent ID programme and the development of a junior canoe slalom squad.

2012 Olympic Games

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assistance, financial and otherwise, his Department is giving to shooting sports in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games. (AQW 1656/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Responsibility for assisting shooting sports in preparation for the 2012 London Olympic Games rests, in the first instance, with the governing bodies of the sports, the Ulster Clay Pigeon Shooting Association (UCPSA), the Ulster Rifle Association (URA) and the Northern Ireland Smallbore Shooting Union (NISSU).

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), however, which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding, has provided financial assistance to shooting sports over the last three financial years as follows:

LOTTERY FUNDING

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
UCPSA	17,600	17,500	13,000
URA	61,115	11,400	-
NISSU	42,900	-	12,000
Totals	121,615	28,900	25,000

One Exchequer award was also made to the URA in 2005/06 of £8,705.

2012 Olympic Games

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assistance, financial and otherwise, his Department is giving to swimming sports in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games. (AQW 1657/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Responsibility for assisting swimming sports in preparation for the 2012 London Olympic Games rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sport, Swim Ulster Limited, which is affiliated to Swim Ireland.

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), however, which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding, has provided financial assistance to swimming sports over the last three financial years as follows:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Lottery	25,000	30,400	14,500
Exchequer	44,857	75,610	83,244
Totals	69,857	106,010	97,744

In addition to this, North Down Borough Council has been appointed as the preferred partner in the development of a 50 metre swimming pool under Phase 1 of the Elite Facilities Capital Programme. The outline business case for this has been approved and work is now proceeding on the full business case.

2012 Olympic Games

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assistance, financial and otherwise, his Department is giving to cycling sports in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games. (AQW 1658/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for assisting cycling sports in preparation for the 2012 London Olympic Games rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sport, Cycling Ulster, the provincial branch of Cycling Ireland.

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), however, which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding, has provided financial assistance to cycling sports over the last three financial years as follows:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Lottery	24,500	144,150	51,985
Exchequer	40,666	187,507	-
Totals	65,166	331,657	51,985

In addition to this, applications have been received by SNI from Belfast City Council, Down District Council and Adfinch Merchants (Newry) for the development of cycling velodromes under the Elite Facilities Capital Programme. These are currently under consideration by SNI.

Leisure Facilities

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans his Department has to promote leisure facilities along the River Lagan, particularly in

Donacloney and Magheralin, and other rural villages in the Upper Bann constituency. (AQW 1697/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department is currently involved in the promotion of leisure facilities along the River Lagan evidenced through the maintenance of the Lagan Canal tow path between Moira and Aghalee, the operation of a public fishery in the lower reaches from Shaws Bridge down to Stranmillis weir and public angling access in an 11 km stretch from Spencers Bridge upstream.

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland, including the distribution of funding, has supported a number of projects in the Upper Bann Constituency, details of which can be provided through SNI.

Further funding opportunities can be explored through Sport NI as well as the Department's other Arms Length Bodies.

Northern Ireland Football

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment of the impact of Northern Ireland football matches not being shown on terrestrial television channels on (i) public support for the Northern Ireland football team; and (ii) young people's participation in football. (AQW 1764/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Irish Football Association (IFA) is responsible for the promotion and development of football in Northern Ireland. This includes assessing the impact of Northern Ireland football matches not being shown on terrestrial television channels on (i) public support for the Northern Ireland football team; and (ii) young people's participation in football. However, the need to improve media relations generally in football, increase support for football teams and encourage participation by young people in the game have been identified as important issues facing soccer under the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's (DCAL) Soccer Strategy initiative. The IFA is currently implementing the recommendations of the Soccer Strategy with assistance from Sport Northern Ireland (SNI).

Sport NI

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what criteria is used by Sport NI when assessing applications for funding from sporting clubs and associations. (AQW 1770/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland operates a number of funding programmes – capital and revenue, exchequer and lottery. Whilst each individual funding programme

will have identified assessment criteria and different priorities for funding, the following general assessment criteria are considered and used to prioritise applications:

- Strategic Fit;
- Sports Development Need;
- Facility Need;
- Financial Need;
- Financing; and
- Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Only those applications which score highly in all areas are likely to be successful in attracting an award.

Football Pitch Improvements

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much his Department has paid for football pitch improvements in each of the last 3 years, broken down by (i) parliamentary constituency; and (ii) council area. (AQW 1789/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI has advised that no Exchequer funding has been paid out for football pitch improvements in the last three financial years to 31 March 2008. However, SNI is currently operating an Exchequer programme called Places for Sport: Surfaces which focuses on providing pitches and sports surfaces. The programme has a budget for this financial year of £1.5 million and the maximum award for each project is up to £245,000 towards construction costs.

Community Relations Council

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the work undertaken by his Department in partnership with the Community Relations Council. (AQW 1790/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department through its Arm Lengths Bodies has worked in partnership with the Community Relations Council (CRC) on a number of projects.

For example, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland chairs the Shared Communities Consortium of which the CRC and a number of other statutory authorities are members. The Shared Communities Consortium oversees the Re-Imaging Communities initiative which encourages the creation of vibrant and attractive shared public space through the use of the creative arts in the public realm.

Northern Ireland Screen has also produced a number of television series in conjunction with the CRC dealing

with issues of mutual understanding. In more recent times NI Screen has worked with CRC on the issue of incoming communities.

In addition the Northern Ireland Museums Council delivered its Cultural Diversity Strategy using funding received through the CRC.

The Armagh Observatory also worked with the CRC earlier this year, as part of its involvement with the Armagh Visitor Education Committee's annual Armagh Heritage Day. This event was organised to promote the wealth of Armagh's written and archival heritage.

Finally since 1998 the Irish Football Association (IFA) has had a full time Community Relations Officer working in partnership with the CRC, with assistance from the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation to tackle the problems of sectarianism in football. This would have involved liaison with bodies such as Sport Northern Ireland, an Arms Length Body of DCAL and the Amalgamation of Official Northern Ireland Supporters Clubs.

Alcohol Consumption

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given the association between alcohol and sponsorship for sport and the arts, what action his Department is taking to encourage responsible alcohol consumption, including initiatives with which his Department has been involved. (AQW 1842/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department and associated Arms Length Bodies are committed to exploring and introducing measures which encourage responsible alcohol consumption.

For example DCAL is working closely with NIO on the development of proposals for new legislation in relation to public order at sports grounds. These include the carrying and consumption of alcohol at sports events.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland also advises groups working with young people not to accept sponsorship from alcoholic drinks companies and not to use venues where alcohol is sold.

I should add that DCAL Events Unit has provided support to events that are part sponsored by drinks companies but on such occasions sensible drinking has been promoted and participants have been referred to the 'drink aware' website.

Finally DCAL supports the facilitation by local Libraries of Health Promotion Agency Literature

Ulster-Scots Curriculum Project

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much his Department invested in the Ulster-Scots curriculum project at Stranmillis University College; and what benefit pupils in schools have derived from it. (AQW 1910/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department did not directly fund the Ulster-Scots Curriculum Development Unit project at Stranmillis. The project work completed by the CDU at Stranmillis was funded by the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group. The total cost of the project, including Stranmillis' management fees was in the region of £1,717,442.

The completed primary and post primary school materials was piloted in twelve post primary and ten primary schools, involving approximately 800 pupils which reflected a range of school type across Northern Ireland. In addition, a couple of schools from the Irish Republic participated in the trial. The feedback from the subsequent evaluation report carried out by the CDU stated that teachers and pupils from all schools were very encouraging not only about specific materials but also regarding the project overall.

EDUCATION

Maintenance Work for Schools

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown by school of the £217 million backlog of maintenance work to be carried out on schools, highlighting work that has health and safety implications. (AQW 548/09)

The Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Tá socraithe agam go gcuirfear an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil.

I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Irish Medium School Sector

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail the amount allocated by her Department to (i) the Irish medium primary school sector; and (ii) the Irish medium post-primary school sector, each year for the last 10 years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 1044/09)

The Minister of Education: Allocations for the last 10 years are set out in the tables below and show recurrent and capital funding separately:

Table 1 - Recurrent Funding			Table 2 - Capital Funding		
Year	Irish Medium Primary Total £	Irish Medium Post Primary Total £	Year	Irish Medium Primary Total £	Irish Medium Post Primary Total £
1998/09	1,918,971	825,315	1998/09*	0	0
1999/00	2,232,520	824,743	1999/00	1,441,649	225,935
2000/01	2,615,263	1,017,355	2000/01	541,122	222,674
2001/02	3,144,111	1,084,431	2001/02	130,717	10,179
2002/03	3,682,134	1,203,019	2002/03	163,921	611,797
2003/04	4,767,576	1,370,160	2003/04	1,034,961	554,258
2004/05	5,141,948	1,468,527	2004/05	1,125,601	1,960,505
2005/06	5,920,654	1,913,927	2005/06	192,138	1,864,736
2006/07	6,614,759	2,135,922	2006/07	65,089	213,534
2007/08	7,875,315	2,284,229	2007/08	436,484	50,507
			* Capital Figures Not Available		

Ní choinnítear na figiúirí seo de réir thoghcheantar parlaiminte agus ní fhéadfaí iad a fháil ach ar chostas a bheadh díréireach.

These figures by parliamentary constituency are not held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Hochtief

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education how much money has been paid by (i) Nendrum College; and (ii) Bangor Academy, to Hochtief since the commencement of their PPP/PFI contract; and for a breakdown of these costs. (AQW 1433/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios ag Príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt go n-íocann Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College agus Nendrum College suim chinnte mhíosúil le Hochtief as na séirbhísí seo a leanas a sholáthar:

The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College and Nendrum College pay a fixed monthly sum to Hochtief for the delivery of the following services: caretaking, grounds maintenance, security, building maintenance, mechanical and electrical maintenance, estates management services, furniture and equipment maintenance, waste management, pest control, toilet consumables, cleaning materials and some aspects of the cleaning service. Nendrum College became operational on 29 February 2008 and since then £17,600 of the school's Local Management of Schools (LMS) budget has been paid to Hochtief. Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College became operational on 30 April 2008 and since then £35,380 of the school's LMS budget has been paid to Hochtief.

I share your reservations on the use of PPP/PFI for the procurement of schools. The Department has a responsibility to consider all procurement options, taking into account guidance and experience and the need to ensure value for money. No PFI procurements have been announced in the schools estate since 2004.

Energy Efficiency of School Buildings

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education what her Department's policy is on improving the energy efficiency of school buildings. (AQW 1442/09)

The Minister of Education: The Department of Education's aim is to promote the efficient use of energy in schools in the north of Ireland, in line with the administration's targets for energy efficiency and the reduction of emissions to the atmosphere, including the Executive's Programme for Government objective to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Implementation Plan 2008-2011.

Bíonn oifigeach Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil fostaithe ag gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, post atá maoinithe ag an Roinn agus bíonn sé mar obair aige nó aici le héifeachtacht fuinnimh a chur chun cinn laistigh d'earnáil na scoileanna.

Each Education and Library Board employs an Energy and Environmental officer funded by the Department whose job is to promote energy efficiency within the schools sector.

Sports Pitches and Facilities

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what her Department is doing to encourage sports clubs to cooperate with schools to share sports pitches and facilities. (AQW 1507/09)

The Minister of Education: Is féidir le páistí agus daoine óga alán tairbhe a bhaint as forbairt a dhéanamh ar a gcuid scileanna fisicúla litearthachta agus as bheith páirteach in imeachtaí spóirt. Cuireann clár spóirt churaclaim na Roinne deiseanna bhreise ar fáil len é seo a dhéanamh d'ár bpáistí is óige bhunscoileanna agus cuirimid fáilte roimh deiseanna chomhoibrithe idir scoileanna agus eagraíochtaí spóirt.

Children and young people can benefit greatly from developing their physical literacy skills and participating in sporting activities. The Department's curriculum sports programme provides additional opportunities to do so for our youngest primary school children, and we welcome opportunities for co-operation between schools and sporting bodies where this is possible.

Through the Extended Schools programme we are seeking to establish each extended school as the hub of its local community engaging positively and actively with neighbouring schools, statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations in an effort to meet the needs of the pupils in the school, their families and the wider community as a whole. We are therefore keen to encourage greater community use of school premises when not otherwise required by the school, including improved access to school sports pitches and facilities.

In addition, where feasible, the Department seeks to encourage school authorities to consider shared sports facilities when examining options for major capital works.

I understand that The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is also currently developing a new 10 year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in the North of Ireland in partnership with Sport NI (SNI). A draft of this Strategy, which was published for consultation in October 2007, contains proposals for encouraging sports clubs to collaborate with schools and the education sector on the sharing of sports facilities.

School Building Projects

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Education to detail the school building projects that are behind schedule; and how far behind schedule each project is. (AQW 1572/09)

The Minister of Education: Cuireadh moill ar na tionscadail atá ainmnithe thíos mar gheall ar chúiseanna éagsúla ina n-áirítear ceisteanna um cheannaocht suíomhanna; um athbhreithniú ar rollú fad téarmach réamh-mheasta; um phleananna athbhreithnithe de dhíth; agus um leasuithe ar bhreithmheasanna eacnamaíochta. Rinneadh measúnú ar an seasamh mar atá in aghaidh na céime ionchais a bheadh bainte amach thairis sin faoin am seo.

The projects identified below have been subject to delay for several reasons including site acquisition issues; review of projected long term enrolments; revised plans required; and revisions to economic appraisals. The position has been assessed against the stage they might otherwise have expected to have reached by now.

School	Details Of Project	Estimated Delay
St Mary's College, Derry	New school on new site	10 months
St Cecilia's College, Derry	New school on existing site	10 months
St Mary's P.S. Portglenone	New school on extended site	4 months
St Joseph's P.S. Carryduff	New school on extended site	4 months
St Patrick's G.S. Downpatrick	New school on existing site	4 months
Our Lady & St Patrick's College	New school on existing site	4 months
Lagan College	Extension & Refurbishment	6 months
Tor Bank Special School	New school on new site	6 months
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	New school on existing site	15 months
Loreto G.S. Omagh	New school on existing site	15 months
Lurgan College	New school on existing site	10 months
Portadown College	New school on existing site	10 months
Methodist College, Belfast	Extension & Refurbishment	18 months
Omagh Integrated Primary School	New school on new site	9 months
Holy Family P.S. Magherafelt	New school on extended site	12 months
Lisnagelvin P.S. Derry	New school on existing site	6 months
Lisbellaw P.S.	New school on existing site	6 months
Carrick P.S. Warrenpoint	New school on extended site	11 months
St Columba's P.S. Straw	New school on new site	9 months
Magherafelt H.S.	New school on existing site	6 months
Whitehouse P.S. Newtownabbey	New school on existing site	10 months
St Clare's Abbey P.S. Newry	New school on extended site	8 months
Bangor Grammar School	New school on new site	8 months
Magherafelt P.S.	New school on new site	12 months
St Colman's P.S. Lambeg	New school on extended site	8 months
St Teresa's P.S. Lurgan	New school on extended site	6 months
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	New school on existing site	10 months
St Conor's P.S. Omagh	New school on extended site	11 months

SEELB Commissioners

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Education for an update on when she intends to replace the Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board and reinstate the Board. (AQW 1622/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn breithniú á dhéanamh ar athbhunú an Bhoird fionraithe SEELB agus fógróidh mé mo chinneadh faoi in am is i dtráth.

The reinstatement of the suspended board of SEELB remains under consideration and I shall announce my decision in due course.

SEELB Commissioners

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Education to detail how much has been spent on allowances and expenses for the SEELB Commissioners since their appointment. (AQW 1624/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt gurbh é costas iomlán na n-íocaíochtaí, speansais san áireamh, a rinneadh do na coimisinéirí ón 6 Iúil 2006, nuair a cheapadh ar dtús iad, go dtí deireadh mí Lúnasa 2008 ná £197,373.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the total cost of payments, including expenses, made to the commissioners from 6 July 2006, when they were first appointed, until the end of August 2008 is £197,373.

Time Spent at Departmental Headquarters

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Education how many full days she has spent in her Departmental headquarters since taking up office. (AQW 1639/09)

The Minister of Education: Bainim usáid as oifig an Aire i bhFoirgnimh na Parlaiminte do fhorhmór mo dhualgas Roinne agus tá 140 lá, iomláin agus páirte, caite agam ansin. Mar gheall ar sin tá 8 lá caite agam ag ceanncheathrú mo Roinne ó chuaigh mé i mbun oifige.

I use my Ministerial office in Parliament Buildings for the great majority of my Departmental duties and have spent 140 full/part days there. In consequence I have spent 8 part days at my Departmental headquarters since taking up office.

Educational Standards

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education what action she has taken in the past year to ensure that educational standards are raised so that young people have the necessary skills to progress into employment. (AQW 1702/09)

The Minister of Education: While standards are high in many schools here, there are still far too many children who are not reaching their full potential: 47% of our young people leave school without having achieved a grade C or better in GCSE Maths and English, the standard sought by employers, and go on to face a lifetime of disadvantage and difficulty in accessing employment. This is simply unacceptable.

My Department has identified as a core priority the need to raise standards and tackle underachievement in our schools and is advancing its efforts in this area under the heading Every School a Good School. Within this heading, we are taking forward two important and interlinked strategies, one concerned with school improvement in the round; the other focusing specifically on raising achievement in literacy and numeracy.

The revised school improvement policy, Every School a Good School, was launched for consultation in January of this year and the final drafting of the policy is well advanced. The policy is clear that all schools are capable of improvement and sets out how we plan to deliver improvement at every level in our education system. It also sets out the interventions

that will be taken where evidence suggests that performance could be better.

Seoladh an togra forbartha scoile athbhreithnithe, Gach Scoil Ina Scoil Mhaith, le haghaidh chomhairliúcháin i mí Eanáir na bliana seo agus tá dréachtú deireanach an togra ina thulstaid. Tá an togra rísholéir go mbíonn gach scoil ábalta feabhas a dhéanamh agus leagann sé amach an phlean atá againn le feabhsú ar gach léibhéal d'ár gcóras oideachais a shólathar. Leagtar amach fosta idirghabhálacha a dhéanfar más rud é go mbíonn fianaise ann a thugann le tuiscint go dtiocfadh le feidhmíocht na scoile bheith níos fearr.

Evidence and inspection findings tell us that 2 key elements to bringing about school improvement are good leadership and the effective use of data. In the context of leadership, my Department has made a significant investment in the development of school leadership skills, particularly through the Professional Qualification for Headship programme. In addition, we have also engaged in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study of school leadership and will be drawing up an action plan to take forward those recommendations appropriate to the education system here.

To promote and support the effective use of data to inform teaching and learning and raise standards, my Department has appointed consultants to examine the range of performance data required by schools and the support that schools might need to make better use of that data. This work will include the consideration of appropriate value added measures.

The revised literacy and numeracy strategy, which is out for consultation until 30th November, aims to ensure that every child leaves compulsory education with the appropriate standards of literacy and numeracy. The focus is on:

- Raising the levels of attainment for all young people in literacy and numeracy;
- Narrowing the gap between the highest performing and lowest performing pupils and schools; and
- Narrowing the gap between the highest performing and lowest performing pupils and schools.

My Department has also commissioned specific programmes, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures, to tackle underachievement in socially deprived areas of Belfast and Derry. These programmes are being introduced from this school year.

The revised school improvement policy and literacy and numeracy strategy complement and support other aspects of my priorities for education, including the revised curriculum, extended schools and my reforms to post-primary education.

Once these key policies are implemented their effectiveness, in terms of their impact on standards, will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Education & Training Inspectorate; the Education and Skills Authority (once established) and by my Department.

I believe these key policies will lead to improved educational standards for all our young people and enable them to fulfil their potential.

Educational Standards

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education what analysis she has made of the effectiveness of the action she has taken in the past year to ensure that educational standards are raised so that young people have the necessary skills to progress into employment. (AQW 1704/09)

The Minister of Education: While standards are high in many schools here, there are still far too many children who are not reaching their full potential: 47% of our young people leave school without having achieved a grade C or better in GCSE Maths and English, the standard sought by employers, and go on to face a lifetime of disadvantage and difficulty in accessing employment. This is simply unacceptable.

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I believe these key policies will lead to improved educational standards for all our young people and enable them to fulfil their potential.

Strike at Movilla High School

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the engagements she has had to date, with the (i) South Eastern Education and Library Board; (ii) teaching union; and (iii) school, in relation to the strike at Movilla High School, Newtownards.

(AQW 1729/09)

The Minister of Education: There is no basis on which the Department can intervene in individual school discipline cases, as the implementation of school discipline policies is a matter for the Principal and the Board of Governors. The resulting dispute in this case is a sensitive matter which can only be resolved through dialogue between the South Eastern Education and Library Board and the NASUWT.

Thug oifigigh agus Príomhfheidhmeannach an SEELB faisnéis dom lena chinntiú go bhfuil mé ar an eolas faoi na príomhfhorbairtí ar fad. D'iarr mé ar gach páirtí go poiblí leas a bhaint as an idirghabháil a thairg an Labour Relations Agency agus Coimisinéir na bPáistí.

I have been briefed by officials and by the Chief Executive of SEELB to ensure that I am aware of all key developments. In my statement to the Assembly on 14 October I publicly urged all those involved to work together in order to find a speedy resolution so that the education of all the pupils at Movilla High School can return to normality as quickly as possible. I understand that talks between the SEELB and the NASUWT are ongoing and I remain hopeful that a settlement can soon be reached in order that all the pupils can resume their education in a safe environment.

New Builds

Mr Doherty asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new builds at (i) Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore; and (ii) Omagh Integrated Primary School; and to detail when each is expected to be completed.

(AQW 1730/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá breithmheasanna eacnamaíochta ar Dean Maguire College agus Omagh Integrated Primary School á leasú faoi lathair leis na hÚdaráis ábhartha le roghanna shuíomhanna nua a chur san áireamh. Leanfaidh na scéimeanna ar aghaidh leis an údarás ábhartha chuig na céimeanna shainphleanála agus deartha chomh luath is a thugtar faomhadh do na breithmheasanna athbhreithnithe.

Economic Appraisals for Dean Maguirc College and Omagh Integrated Primary School are currently being updated with the relevant authorities to take account of new site options. Once the revised appraisals have been approved the schemes will proceed with the relevant authority to the detailed

planning and design stages. Progress will be subject to the necessary planning and building processes being completed satisfactorily and the availability of resources in any particular year. It is currently anticipated that the replacement buildings would be completed in the 2011/12 financial year.

Educational Psychology Services

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) the basis on which Educational Psychology Services, provided by Education and Library Boards, are prioritising the referrals presented to them by schools; and; (ii) if there is a limit of referrals per school.

(AQW 1737/09)

The Minister of Education: I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that all Boards, with the exception of the South – Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB), use a Time Allocation model of service delivery. Using this system each school has its own waiting list of referrals to the Boards' Educational Psychology Services. It is, therefore, the schools which prioritise the pupils whom they deem to be most in need of assessment, usually through discussion with the Boards' Educational Psychology Services. This model allows schools to appraise the needs of pupils on their waiting lists on an ongoing basis.

In the SEELB referrals to the Boards Educational Psychology Services are prioritised as follows:-

- Referrals for Statutory Assessment;
- Contributions to the Annual Review process;
- Referrals for non statutory assessment.

Baineann sé le gach Bord más rud é go gcuirtear eolas os comhair an tSiceolaí Oideachais (EP) le linn chomhairliúcháin a léiríonn go bhfuil cuinsí ar leith ag an dalta, déanfar tosaíocht de na hatreoruithe sin.

In all Boards if information is presented to the Educational Psychologist (EP) during consultation that indicates that the pupil has exceptional circumstances such referrals will receive priority.

There is no set limit to the number of referrals a school can make although the number of pupils who can be assessed by an EP may be limited within a given period due to the overall capacity of the service.

Free Nursery Places

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the allocation of free nursery places in (a) Newtownabbey; (b) Carrickfergus; and (c) Larne Borough Council areas; and (ii) the number of these places that have been filled.

(AQW 1739/09)

The Minister of Education: Funded pre-school provision is provided in statutory nursery schools, nursery units attached to statutory primary schools and in voluntary and private settings.

Dheimhnigh Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an OirThuaiscirt go bhfuil 934 áiteanna mhaoinithe i naíscóileanna ar fáil i gceantar Chomhairle Baile na Mainistreach; 468 áiteanna ar fáil i gceantar Chomhairle Carraig Fheargais; agus 279 áiteanna ar fáil i gceantar Chomhairle Latharna sa bhliain 2008/09.

The NEELB has confirmed that in 2008/09 there are 934 funded pre-school places available in the Newtownabbey Borough Council area; 468 in the Carrickfergus council area; and 279 in the Larne council area.

Since the end of the 2008/09 admissions process the NEELB has responded to requests for additional places from voluntary providers to accommodate children unplaced through the admissions process. Eleven additional places have been re-allocated to Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Larne Borough Council areas.

The NEELB has written to the Department requesting additional resources for a shortfall of 60 pre-school places in the board area. Of these, 3 are in the Newtownabbey Borough Council area, 2 in the Carrickfergus council area, and 1 in the Larne council area.

Ballywalter Primary School

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Education if funding has been allocated for a new build for Ballywalter Primary School; and what is the timescale for the new build to be completed. (AQW 1771/09)

The Minister of Education: Níor tugadh maoiniú le haghaidh scoil nua tógála do Ballywalter Primary School. Ní féidir mar sin amscála a thabhairt maidir le tionscadal don scoil.

Funding has not been allocated for a new build school for Ballywalter Primary School. It is not possible therefore to provide a timescale for a project for the school.

Anti-Bullying Policies of Schools

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Education to report on what progress is being made to ensure that within the anti-bullying policies of schools, there are specific clauses dealing with homophobic bullying. (AQW 1776/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tromaíocht hómafóbach inár seomraí ranga agus inár sochaí doghlactha.

Homophobic bullying is unacceptable in our classrooms and in our society.

All schools are required by law to have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils and it is a matter for them to determine, in consultation with pupils and parents, the detail of their policy.

The Department's publication 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour' offers detailed guidance, practical initiatives and case studies to support schools to tackle bullying. The guidance specifically states that racist, homophobic, sectarian or other offensive name-calling is a form of bullying.

The Department continues to work in close partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations to address bullying in all its forms. It is for this reason that it plays an active role in and funds the local Anti-Bullying Forum which has established a number of working groups, one of which is specifically considering the issue of homophobic bullying.

The Department is fully committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child especially Article 19, which concerns the child's right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

The Department has been working, and will continue to work, with both the Equality Commission and Human Rights Commission to ensure that equality and human rights are reflected throughout schools.

The Department has noted Section 5.3 of the Equality Commission's guidance (A Guide on the Provision of Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises) on the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006 which recommends, "Schools will need to ensure that homophobic bullying is taken seriously and dealt with as firmly as bullying on any other grounds".

Pupil to Teacher Ratio

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the pupil to teacher ratio in Scotland. (AQW 1778/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá cóimheasa Dalta:Múinteoir (PTR anna) mar a leanas:

The Pupil:Teacher Ratios (PTRs) are as follows:

Region	Overall PTR
England ¹	16.9
Scotland	13.3
Wales	17.9

1 - The overall PTR for England excludes special schools

Pupil to Teacher Ratio

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the pupil to teacher ratio in Wales.
(AQW 1780/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá cóimheasa Dalta:Múinteoir (PTR anna) mar a leanas:

The Pupil:Teacher Ratios (PTRs) are as follows:

Region	Overall PTR
England 1	16.9
Scotland	13.3
Wales	17.9

1 - The overall PTR for England excludes special schools

Pupil to Teacher Ratio

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the pupil to teacher ratio in England.
(AQW 1781/09)

The Minister of Education: The Pupil:Teacher Ratios (PTRs) are as follows:

Region	Overall PTR
England 1	16.9
Scotland	13.3
Wales	17.9

1 - The overall PTR for England excludes special schools

Translating Speeches and Statements

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to her Department of translating her speeches and statements from English into Irish.
(AQW 1782/09)

The Minister of Education: Is mar chuid intreacht é aistriúchán na n-óráidí agus na ráiteas ó Bhéarla go Gaeilge den na freagrachtaí a bhíonn ag an bheirt ofigeach Gaeilge sa Roinn Oideachais. Mar gheall ar sin, ní dhéantar aon áireamh ar leith ar chostais a thabhaítear ar na saindualgaí seo

The translation of speeches and statements from English into Irish forms an intrinsic part of the responsibilities of the Department of Education's two Irish Language Staff Officers. Consequently, the costs incurred in these specific duties are not separately calculated.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the criticisms contained in the recent United Nations report on the United Kingdom's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in relation to the segregation of education in Northern Ireland.
(AQW 1786/09)

The Minister of Education: In the Concluding Observations of the Forty-ninth session of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child it was recommended that measures be taken to address segregation of education.

Much work has been taken forward to improve planning of new schools, including integrated schools. My Department has published a Sustainable Schools Policy, which explicitly considers Integrated Education. The published Sustainable Schools document has at the heart of its policy context a recognition that "new opportunities for collaboration and sharing in education should be pursued".

The stated aim is about integrating education in much wider way than just focusing on religion. The published Sustainable Schools document notes the recommendation in the Bain Report that ESA should be required to maximise opportunities for integrating education within a system of sustainable schools. The document states, "The Department will therefore examine school proposals in future for opportunities for delivering a more inclusive approach."

Tugann an beartas dá aire an dualgas reachtúil atá ar mo Roinn le Oideachas imeasctha a spreagadh agus a éascú. Glacaim leis an dualgas seo le lán dáiríreacht. Áfach, caithfidh mé bheith cinnte agus tograi do scoileanna imeasctha nua á mbreathnú agam go mbeidh said láidir, nach dtabhóidh said aon chaiteachas poiblí atá míréasúnta agus go mbeidh said oiriúnach de réir na gcritéar a shonraítear.

The Policy notes my Department's statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated education. I take this duty very seriously. However, in considering proposals for new integrated schools I must ensure that these are robust, do not involve unreasonable public expenditure and meet the specified criteria. This notwithstanding, it should be noted also that my Department operates a unique, twin-track approach to enable the development of the integrated sector. In addition to the new schools available to all sectors, the Integrated sector can grow through transformation of existing, viable schools.

The application of and commitment to the duty by my Department has seen the number of integrated schools increase from 33 in 1997 to 58 in 2007, and the number of pupils attending integrated schools has more than doubled to over 18,000 in the same period.

In addition to the published Sustainable Schools Policy, my Department is currently consulting on Area-Based Planning of the Schools' Estate. This policy will both determine and address the need for provision in an area. Area Plans will need to include an examination of opportunities for sharing and collaboration to deliver education. The Area Based Planning consultation document states "ESA (will have) responsibility for facilitating and encouraging cross-sector collaboration".

I recognise that change is required in how we plan, finance and deliver education to best meet the needs of all children in the 21st century, and that I am determined to tackle the issues with appropriate measures and policies.

Children with Dyslexia

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education how many schools have obtained 'dyslexia friendly' status to meet the needs of children with dyslexia, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 1788/09)

The Minister of Education: Níl an t-eolas a iarradh ar fáil de réir thoghcheantar parlaiminte; tá an freagra á chur ar fáil mar sin de, de réir limistéar an Bhoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne (ELB).

The information requested is not available by parliamentary constituency; the response provided is therefore by Education and Library Board (ELB) area.

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the ELBs that the vast majority of schools have had staff awareness training in developing a "dyslexia friendly" learning environment. In addition a number of schools have either obtained or are working towards the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) kitemark for "dyslexia friendly" status as follows:-

Belfast Education and Library Board	none
North-Eastern Education and Library Board	7
South-Eastern Education and Library Board	2
Southern Education and Library Board	1
Western Education and Library Board	7

Children with Dyslexia

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education how many mainstream schools have appointed a dedicated teacher for children with dyslexia, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 1791/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní choinníonn an Roinn Oideachais ná na Boird Oideachais agus

Leabharlainne (ELB's) an teolas a iarradh. Tá tugtha mar chomhairle dom ag Príomhfheidhmeannaí na ELB's go mbíonn séirbhísí ionadbhunaithe acu a thugann tacaíocht do pháistí a bhfuil deachrachtaí litearthachta ar leith acu agus a mbíonn ag freastal ar ghnáthscoil.

The information requested is not held by either the Department of Education or the Education and Library Boards (ELBs). I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the ELBs that Boards have centre-based services that support children with specific literacy difficulties who are in a mainstream school. In addition selected schools have obtained dyslexia friendly status to support a whole school approach to meeting the needs of the child. Some mainstream schools may appoint a dedicated teacher for children with dyslexia, although this is at the discretion of the school.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the work carried out by CCEA since 15 May 2008, on behalf of the Department, to prepare a test paper in line with her proposals for post primary transfer. (AQW 1796/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá dréachtú déanta ar mhionshonraíocht agus ar chlár oibre a mbaineann le forbairt ar shás measúnú, déanfar forbairt ansin ar ábhar an scrúdaithe.

A detailed specification and programme of work in relation to the development of an assessment mechanism has been drawn up, to proceed then to the development of the test content. This will be extensively trialled and will be subject to a rigorous development process.

Transfer Process

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 1631/09, to detail, in the absence of an agreed way forward, how the Department defines 'have regard'; and whether after schools give regard to any guidelines issued by the Department, they are legally permitted to put in place their own transfer process, including an academic selective element. (AQW 1797/09)

The Minister of Education: Measaim go mbeadh treoirilnte na Roinne ina cáipéis thábhachtach do na scoileanna sa chomhthéacs seo nuair atá breathnú á dhéanamh acu ar fhorbairt na gcritéar iontrála agus an ról atá acu lastigh den phróiseas iontrála a chomhlíonadh.

I consider that Departmental guidance in this context would be an important document for schools

to consider in developing their admissions criteria and performing their role within the admissions process. Disregard for this guidance through the operation of an independently administered transfer process may be lawful, but may carry with it risks and uncertainties.

Schools Transfer Process

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 1631/09, to detail, in the absence of an agreement, what legislative authority will apply to guidelines issued by her Department to those schools implementing their own transfer process. (AQW 1798/09)

The Minister of Education: Maidir le treoir ar iontrálacha a eiseofaí chuig gach scoil muna mbeadh comhaontú ann ar an bhealach chun tosaigh, d'eiseofaí an treoir sin de réir Airteagal 16B den Education Order (NI) 1997, arna leasú le hAirteagal 30 den Education Order (NI) 2006. Chun an reachtaíocht a lua ina hiomlán:

Admissions guidance issued to all schools in the absence of an agreed way forward would be issued according to Article 16B of the Education Order (NI) 1997, as amended by Article 30 of the Education Order (NI) 2006. To quote the legislation in full:

“Guidance as to admissions

16B.(1) The Department may issue, and from time to time revise, such guidance as it thinks appropriate in respect of the arrangements for the admission of pupils to grant-aided schools and the discharge by—

- (a) boards;
- (b) the Boards of Governors of grant-aided schools;
- (c) appeal tribunals constituted in accordance with regulations under Article 15(8); and
- (d) the body established by regulations under Article 16A(6),

of their respective functions under this Part.

- (2) The guidance may in particular set out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of those functions.
- (3) It shall be the duty of—
 - (a) each of the bodies mentioned in paragraph (1); and
 - (b) any other person exercising any function for the purposes of the discharge by such a body of functions under this Part,

to have regard to any relevant guidance for the time being in force under this Article.”

Harassment and Bullying of Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what processes are in place to help teachers and school staff who have been victims of harassment and bullying in each (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) sector. (AQW 1799/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus ag Comhairle na Scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil go mbíonn rochtain ag gach ball foirne, idir foireann a mhúineann agus fhoireann nach múineann, d'a gcuid Polasaithe faoi Bhualáíocht agus faoi Chiapadh agus go ndéarnadh comhaontú ar na polasaithe seo leis na Ceardchumannn. Soláthraíonn na polasaithe faoi seach seo módh le gearáin a dhéanamh, a imscrudú agus a réiteach. Bíonn idirghabháil ar fáil mar chuid na hoibríochta den pholasaí nó mar mhalairt air.

The education and library boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have indicated that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have access to their respective Bullying and Harassment Policies which have been agreed with the trade unions. The respective policies provide a procedure to report, investigate and resolve complaints. Mediation is available either within the operation of the policy or as an alternative to it.

All staff both teaching and non-teaching also have access to a welfare service and a confidential counselling service at any time. The availability of the counselling service is emphasised to staff when a complaint of bullying or harassment is received. However, the service is self-referring and completely confidential so the decision whether or not to avail of counselling is up to the member of staff.

Harassment and Bullying of Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education the number of incidents of harassment and bullying of teachers and school staff in total; and broken down by (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) sector, in each of the last three years. (AQW 1800/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an teolas seo a leanas curtha ar fáil ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus ag Comhairle na Scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil maidir le teagmhais faoi bhualáíocht agus faoi chiapadh a rinneadh ar mhúinteoirí agus ar fhoireann scoile ag foireann eile.

The education and library boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have provided the following information in respect of incidents of bullying and harassment of teachers and school staff by other staff.

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
	Controlled	Maintained	Controlled	Maintained	Controlled	Maintained
BELB	1	0	1	2	0	0
NEELB	3	2	2	1	3	0
SEELB*	0	3	0	0	0	0
SELB	3	0	1	1	0	0
WELB	0	2	0	1	0	1
Total	7	7	4	5	3	1

* The SEELB does not hold this information

The Department publishes information on the number of pupil suspensions for verbal abuse and physical assault on teachers. The information is as follows:

	2005/06			2006/07		
	Controlled	Catholic Maintained	Other	Controlled	Catholic Maintained	Other
BELB	188	197	49	190	259	47
NEELB	408	99	54	391	125	67
SEELB	304	107	95	140	58	26
SELB	174	237	83	130	199	32
WELB	81	223	137	103	291	70
Total	1155	863	418	954	932	242

The numbers of expulsions are relatively small and are not disaggregated between education and library boards because of the risk that a school/pupil may be identifiable. In 2005/06 and 2006/07 there were 8 and 14 instances respectively of expulsion relating to physical assaults on teaching staff. The suspension and expulsions statistics for 2007/08 school year are currently being analysed by the Department and will be placed on the DE website when this has been completed.

Newly Graduated Teachers

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made in relation to introducing an induction year for newly graduated teachers. (AQW 1805/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá seasamh an scéil fós mar a bhí leagtha amach sa litir a chuir mé chugat ar 11 Feabhra 2008.

The position remains as set out in my letter to you of 11 February 2008.

The costs associated with the introduction of a guaranteed induction year for newly qualified teachers here are substantial. It is estimated that a guarantee to students graduating after 2008 would cost over £12 million in the first year and over £20 million in subsequent years. The Department does not currently have the available resources to take this forward.

In light of the current funding restraints, falling enrolments and reduced intakes, it is unlikely that the guaranteed induction arrangements in Scotland could be introduced here.

Schools in Islandmagee

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to provide (i) a progress report on the plans to amalgamate schools in Islandmagee on a new site; and (ii) the dates when (a) the three schools agreed to amalgamation; (b) planning permission for the site was granted; (c) the site was purchased and its cost; (d) recommendations for the area groups and Department will be made public; and (e) she will announce her decision on the funding and building of the new school. (AQW 1812/09)

The Minister of Education: The amalgamation involves Kilcoan Primary School and Mullaghduh Primary School. The Department was first advised of the potential rationalisation in March 2002 and there were originally three schools involved. The third school, Ballypriormore Primary School however closed at in December 2003. A development proposal for the amalgamation of Kilcoan and Mullaghduh Primary Schools was published in December 2003 and approved in April 2004.

A revised economic appraisal for the amalgamation was approved by the Department on 17 October 2006. The recommended option is for a new amalgamated school on a new site. No decision has been taken on the timing of the next capital funding announcement and I cannot at this stage give a commitment on timing of a decision on the funding for a new build for the school.

Outline planning approval was granted on 4 July 2005. The main site was purchased on 30 April 2007 at a cost of £900,000 and land to provide sight lines was purchased on 5 September 2008 at a cost of £5,000.

Cuireadh an cleachtadh pleanála reatha bunaithe sa cheantair ar bun le breithniú a dhéanamh, ar bhonn réigiúnach, ar na socraithe is éifeachtaí agus is éifeachtúla leis an Chreatlach Tedilíochta a sholathár do dhaoine óga ón bhliain 2013 ar aghaidh tríd oideachas iarbhunscolaíochta. D'iarr mé ar an Ghrúpa Lárnach, agus an cleachtadh seo á chur chun cinn acu, le plean réigiúnach a dhréachtú roimh dheireadh mí na Feabhra 2009.

The current area based planning exercise has been established to consider, on a regional basis, the most efficient and effective arrangements for the post-primary phase of education to deliver the Entitlement Framework to young people, from 2013 onwards. I have asked the Central Group, which is taking this exercise forward, to draw up a draft regional plan by the end of February 2009.

Woodburn Primary School

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to provide (i) a progress report on the plans to build a new Woodburn Primary School; and (ii) the dates when (a) planning permission for the site was granted; (b) the site was purchased and its cost; (c) recommendations for the area groups and Department will be made public; and (d) she will announce her decision on the funding and building of the new school. (AQW 1813/09)

The Minister of Education: The Department approved the economic appraisal for Woodburn primary School in January 2008. The recommended option is for a new replacement school on the extended existing site. Outline Planning Approval was granted on 20 January 2004. Additional land required for the development of a new school was purchased on 3 March 2006 at a cost of £250,000.

No decision has been taken on the timing of the next capital announcement and I cannot at this stage give a commitment on timing of a decision on the funding of a new build for the school.

Cuireadh an cleachtadh pleanála reatha bunaithe sa cheantair ar bun le breithniú a dhéanamh, ar bhonn réigiúnach, ar na socraithe is éifeachtaí agus is éifeachtúla leis an Chreatlach Tedilíochta a sholathár do dhaoine óga ón bhliain 2013 ar aghaidh tríd oideachas iarbhunscolaíochta. D'iarr mé ar an Ghrúpa Lárnach, agus an cleachtadh seo á chur chun cinn acu, le plean réigiúnach a dhréachtú roimh dheireadh mí na Feabhra 2009.

The current area based planning exercise has been established to consider, on a regional basis, the most efficient and effective arrangements for the post-primary phase of education to deliver the Entitlement Framework to young people, from 2013 onwards. I have asked the Central Group, which is taking this exercise forward, to draw up a draft regional plan by the end of February 2009.

Bookstart Programme

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to make a statement on the future of the Bookstart Programme. (AQW 1823/09)

The Minister of Education: Creidim go bhfuil sé iontach tábhachtach go bhféachfaimid le suim sa léitheoireacht a chothú i measc daoine óga agus le tacaíocht a thabhairt do thuismitheoirí a oiread agus is féidir. Tá cuid mhór acmhainní leithdháilte ag an Roinn chun tacaíocht a thabhairt don Bookstart Programme le blianta beaga anuas, agus is léir go bhfuil cuid mhór le tairiscint aige ina leith seo.

I believe it is very important that we seek to cultivate an interest in reading in young children and support parents as much as possible. The Bookstart Programme, to which the Department has allocated considerable resources in its support over recent years, clearly has much to offer in this regard.

As you may be aware my Department has recently issued a revised literacy and numeracy strategy for consultation and the results of the consultation process will be available early next year.

I can confirm that my Department has provided £200k for the Bookstart Programme through the 2008/09 regional literacy action plan. This plan is based on the direction of travel outlined in the revised literacy and numeracy strategy and will cover the transition year prior to the establishment of ESA.

While I appreciate your concerns about long term future funding, I am sure however you will understand that until the outcomes of the consultation have been considered and the way forward agreed I am currently unable to make any further determinations about the long term future funding arrangements for the Bookstart programme.

Temporary Teachers

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to each Education and Library Board of employing temporary teachers through recruitment agencies, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1824/09)

The Minister of Education: Taispeántar sa tábla thíos, an costas a thabhaítear ag gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne trí fhostaíocht mhúinteoirí sealadacha ó ghníomhaíochtaí earcaíochta i ngach bliain le trí bliana anuas.

The cost to each Education and Library Board of employing temporary teachers through recruitment agencies, in each of the last 3 years is as outlined in the table below:

Employer/ Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
BELB	£203,197.00	£109,863.00	£35,827.00
WELB	0	0	0
SELB	£20,886.00	£13,626.00	£1,825.00
NEELB	£114,725.00	£76,822.00	£63,694.00
SEELB	£258,083.00	£134,007.00	£67,914.00

Temporary Teachers

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education how schools arrange their temporary teacher list to cover daily supply work. (AQW 1826/09)

The Minister of Education: Ó thús na scoilbhliana seo, éilítear ar gach scoil úsáid a bhaint as Clár na Múinteoirí Ionaid chun gach múinteoir ionaid cáilithe a íoctar ar phárolla na Roinne a chur in áirithe. Is féidir teacht ar chóip den imlitir ábhartha ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne ag <http://www.deni.gov.uk/dc2008-10.pdf>.

From the start of this school year, all schools are required to use the Substitute Teachers Register for booking all qualified substitute teachers paid through the Departmental payroll. A copy of the relevant circular can be found on the Department's website at <http://www.deni.gov.uk/dc2008-10.pdf>.

The Department has also advised teachers' employers that retired teachers should only be re-employed to provide short-term cover where newly qualified teachers or experienced non-retired teachers are unavailable.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to address the issue of children with less than 85% attendance in School. (AQW 1870/09)

The Minister of Education: Ó mhí Mheán Fómhair 2006, bíonn córas nua caighdeánaithe in úsáid ag scoileanna le neamhláithreachta a chlarú, i ndiaidh nuashonruithe a rinneadh ar an mhodúil tinrimh den chóras Classroom 2000 (C2K). Cuireann é seo ar chumas na scoileanna clárú a dhéanamh ar neamhláithreachta na ndaltaí, ar fáthanna don neamhláithreachta agus más neamhláithreachta údaraithe nó neamhúdaraithe í.

Since September 2006, a new standardised system of recording absences has been used in schools, following an update of the attendance module of the Classroom 2000 (C2K) system. This enables schools to record pupils' absences, the reasons for the absence and

whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. This new data is being collected in the current School Census exercise which began in October and will be used to inform the setting of targets on pupil attendance. Once targets have been developed, the Department will issue guidance to schools on how best to promote regular attendance and on approaches to early and effective intervention.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) receives referrals from schools when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%.

The initial response to a referral of a pupil by a school to EWS is a home visit. This provides the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with an opportunity to assess whether the absence is condoned by parents and if they are in a position to ensure regular attendance. When this is the case court action may be considered.

Where parents are judged to be in need of support or addressing the underlying reasons for non-attendance will require sustained intervention, then the EWO will act as lead worker and in collaboration with all parties seek to agree an action plan. This may involve a 'case conference' at which the pupil, his parents and the school are represented. Depending on the nature of the presenting problems participation may be broadened to include other agencies. For pupils with particular problems regular attendance at their host school, or any other mainstream school, may not be an option. Where this is the case, pupils may be referred by their EWO to a suitable alternative education programme.

Pre-School Children

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of pre-school children who have accessed a funded place in nursery school or in a playgroup, broken down by District Council area. (AQW 1871/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní féidir leis na cúig Bhórd Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an teolas seo a sholáthar i bhformáid chomhsheasmhach.

This information cannot be provided in a consistent format by the five Education and Library Boards.

What I can confirm, in respect of the 2008/09 school year, is that Education and Library Boards have notified a net return of 20 funded places, which have not been taken up in the voluntary/private sector, under funding provided via the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme. Final figures will only be available at the conclusion of the 2008 School Census exercise.

In the 2007/08 school year, there were 21,118 children in funded pre-school education. The school projection model used at the time predicted 22,264 P1 pupils in September 2008. This would indicate that

the pre-school phase overall level of provision was running at 94%.

As not every parent wants to avail of a pre-school place for their children, and as the pre-school phase of education is not compulsory, this level of provision is considered sufficient to meet demand.

Pre-School Children

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of pre-school children who have not been able to access a funded place in nursery school or in a playgroup, broken down by District Council area. (AQW 1872/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní féidir leis na cúig Bhórd Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an teolas seo a sholáthar i bhformáid chomhsheasmhach.

This information cannot be provided in a consistent format by the five Education and Library Boards.

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As not every parent wants to avail of a pre-school place for their children, and as the pre-school phase of education is not compulsory, this level of provision is considered sufficient to meet demand.

GCSE Grades

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C, broken down by (i) both council area and; (ii) ward area. (AQW 1873/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh curtha i leabharlann an Tionóil.

The information requested has been placed in the Assembly library.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the rate per thousand of 5-17 year old pupils that have less than 85% school attendance, broken down by (i) council area; and (ii) electoral ward. (AQW 1874/09)

The Minister of Education: Faoi mar atá an scéal faoi láthair, ní choinníonn an Roinn an teolas a iarradh.

The Department does not currently hold the information sought.

Since September 2006, a new standardised system of recording absences has been used in schools, following an update of the attendance module of the Classroom 2000 (C2K) system. This enables schools to record pupils' absences, the reasons for the absence and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Department had planned to collect this new data with the annual school census in October 2007. However additional software was required to facilitate the transfer of detailed, yet anonymised, attendance data to the Department for analysis. This software is now in place and data for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 school years is being collected as part of the current census exercise.

Early Retirement Policies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the Department's policy on early retirement; and (ii) the retirement options for (a) teachers; and (b) school staff. (AQW 1886/09)

The Minister of Education:

- (a) The Department manages and administers the Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS) on behalf of teachers' employers. The Scheme includes arrangements that allow teachers who retire prematurely to have their pension paid early without actuarial reduction and, at the employers' discretion, to be awarded further compensation in the form of an additional service credit ("added years"). These arrangements are intended to provide a management tool that employing authorities can use to bring about a qualitative improvement in the educational provision in their schools.

Bionn eolas faoi na roghanna scoir ar fáil faoin Scéim foilsithe ar shuíomh greasáin na Roinne:

Information about the retirement options available under the Scheme is published on the Department's website:

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/teachers-pg/64_teachers-pensionscheme_pg/leaflets/retirement_arrangements_and_planning.htm

- (b) The early retirement of school staff other than teachers is a matter for their employing authorities. The normal retirement age for non-teaching staff is 65 although, like teachers, staff have the right to request to work beyond normal retirement age with the consent of their employer. They may also request flexible retirement after the age of 50 (55 with effect from 2010). The Education and Library Boards operate a Scheme for Redundancy In Accordance With The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations (NI) 2006; and a Scheme for the Premature Retirement Of Board Officers (Aged 50 and Over) in the Interest of The Efficient Discharge of the Employer's Function.

Disciplinary Proceedings

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) potential disciplinary offences for (a) teachers; and (b) school staff, and (ii) the disciplinary processes that are in place for (c) primary; and (d) post primary schools. (AQW 1887/09)

The Minister of Education: (i) (a) agus (b) Ní féidir bheith saintreorach maidir le cad is cion araíonachta ann. Is féidir le réimse na gcionta a bheith leathan. Ó mhí-iompar beag mar shampla gan neamhláithreachta a chur in iúl, go dtí mí-iompar tromchúiseach féideartha a bheadh dífhostú mar thoradh air, mar shampla i gcásanna a bhaineann le ceisteanna um chosaint leanai. Tá liosta de na mí-iompair féideartha curtha san áireamh in imlitir TNC 2008/4 agus is féidir teacht uirthi ar shuíomh greasáin na Roinne –

(www.deni.gov.uk/index/teachers-pg/81_teachers-payandconditions_pg.htm).

(i) (a) and (b) It is not possible to be prescriptive in terms of what constitutes a disciplinary offence. Offences can range from minor misconduct such as failing to report absence through to potential gross misconduct that may result in dismissal such as cases involving child protection issues. Whilst not exhaustive a list of potential disciplinary offences is included in the TNC 2008/4 Circular which can be found on the Department's website - (www.deni.gov.uk/index/teachers-pg/81_teachers-payandconditions_pg.htm).

(ii) (c) and (d) Both teachers and support staff have disciplinary procedures in place which have been agreed through the relevant negotiating machinery and include features that satisfy rules of natural justice and legislative requirements. These procedures can be found on the employing authorities' websites. The procedures apply equally to primary and post-primary sectors.

School Counselling Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the counselling services in place for (i) teachers and school staff; and (ii) pupils in (a) primary schools; and (b) post primary schools. (AQW 1888/09)

The Minister of Education:

- (i) Cuireann gach údarás fostóra réimse sheirbhísí comhairleoireachta ar fáil do mhúinteoirí agus d'fhoireann scoile i mbunscoileanna agus in iarbunscoileanna araon.

Each employing authority provides a range of counselling services available to teachers and school staff in both primary and post primary schools. These include -

- the availability of welfare officers,
- 24 hour telephone helplines,
- independent sessions with trained counsellors, and
- referral to occupational health specialists.

The identity of those availing of the services remains confidential and is not disclosed to the employing authority. The employing authorities have recently agreed to extend existing access to confidential counselling services to all teachers via a 24 hour telephone helpline, and to consider the scope for further centralising the provision of teacher welfare services.

- (ii) Counselling support is available to all post primary schools which wish it and this support on the basis of half day per week (three full counselling sessions) is available in 98% of these schools. Additional resources have now been made available to extend a Programme to Promote Pupils' Emotional Health and Wellbeing into the primary and special education sectors. This expansion will focus on developing pupils' resilience and coping capacities and include access to appropriate therapeutic interventions – this may include counselling support. On the basis of available funding, the expansion will have to be phased over three years and it may be 2010/11 before a counselling service is accessible to pupils across the primary and special sectors.

Disciplinary Proceedings

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of disciplinary proceedings initiated in relation to incidents of (i) harassment; and (ii) bullying, of teachers and school staff broken down by (a) Education and Library Board; and (b) sector, in each of the last three years. (AQW 1889/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an teolas seo a leanas curtha ar fáil ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus ag Comhairle na Scoileanna

Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil faoi lion iomlán na n-imeachtaí araíonachta a bhí tosaithe maidir le (i) ciapadh; agus le (ii) bulaíocht, a rinneadh ar mhúinteoirí agus ar fhoirne scoile.

The education and library boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have provided the following information in respect of the total number of disciplinary proceedings initiated in relation to incidents of (i) harassment; and (ii) bullying, of teachers and school staff.

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
	Controlled	Maintained	Controlled	Maintained	Controlled	Maintained
BELB	1	0	1	0	0	0
NEELB	0	0	2	0	0	0
SEELB*	0	1	0	0	0	0
SELB	1	0	0	0	0	0
WELB	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	2	2	3	1	0	0

* The SEELB does not hold this information

The Department publishes information on the number of pupil suspensions for verbal abuse and physical assault on teachers. The information is as follows:

	2005/06			2006/07		
	Controlled	RC Maintained	Other	Controlled	RC Maintained	Other
BELB	188	197	49	190	259	47
NEELB	408	99	54	391	125	67
SEELB	304	107	95	140	58	26
SELB	174	237	83	130	199	32
WELB	81	223	137	103	291	70
Total	1155	863	418	954	932	242

The numbers of expulsions are relatively small and are not disaggregated between education and library boards because of the risk that a school/pupil may be identifiable. In 2005/06 and 2006/07 there were 8 and 14 instances respectively of expulsion relating to physical assaults on teaching staff. The suspension and expulsions statistics for 2007/08 school year are currently being analysed by the Department and will be placed on the DE website when this has been completed.

Public Transport

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils who used public transport to attend (i) primary schools; and (ii) post primary schools, during the academic year 2007-8, broken down by (a) Education and Library Board; and (b) sector. (AQW 1891/09)

The Minister of Education: Ni choinníonn an Roinn Oideachais eolas a bhaineann le módhanna taistil a bhíonn in úsáid ag na daltaí sin nach mbíonn i dteideal chuidiú iompair ó bhaile go scoil.

The Department of Education does not hold information relating to the travel methods employed by those pupils not eligible to receive home to school transport assistance. As such, the tables below detail the information you have requested but only pertain to those pupils in receipt of home to school transport assistance and travelling on Translink services under the normal sessional ticket arrangement:

BELFAST BOARD

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Controlled and Maintained Primary*	0	2	0
Controlled and Maintained Post-Primary*	21	68	1
Voluntary Grammar	36	269	2
Integrated:			
Primary	0	140	0
Post-Primary	349	533	3
Special:			
Primary Schools	0	6	0
Post-Primary Schools	1	31	0
Special Schools	0	0	0
Irish-Medium:			
Primary	0	3	0
Post-Primary	0	62	0
Alternative Education Provision	0	1	1
Total	407	1,115	7

NORTH-EASTERN BOARD

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Controlled and Maintained Primary*	708	0	1
Controlled and Maintained Post-Primary*	7,370	245	73
Voluntary Grammar	5,499	1,003	202

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Integrated:			
Primary	29	41	0
Post-Primary	997	103	162
Special:			
Primary Schools	0	0	0
Post-Primary Schools	0	0	0
Special Schools	4	0	2
Irish-Medium:			
Primary	2	3	0
Post-Primary	9	4	0
Alternative Education Provision	3	0	0
Total	14,621	1,399	440

SOUTH-EASTERN BOARD

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Controlled and Maintained Primary*	202	2	0
Controlled and Maintained Post-Primary*	3,038	34	8
Voluntary Grammar	7,809	275	218
Integrated:			
Primary	27	21	0
Post-Primary	1,215	24	8
Special:			
Primary Schools	4	4	0
Post-Primary Schools	304	3	3
Special Schools	1	0	0
Irish-Medium:			
Primary	2	0	0
Post-Primary	34	68	0
Alternative Education Provision	29	2	1
Total	12,665	433	238

SOUTHERN BOARD

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Controlled and Maintained Primary*	95	0	0
Controlled and Maintained Post-Primary*	3,896	0	1
Voluntary Grammar	6,467	0	31
Integrated:			

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Primary	55	0	0
Post-Primary	710	0	3
Special:			
Primary Schools	5	0	0
Post-Primary Schools	167	0	0
Special Schools	0	0	0
Irish-Medium:			
Primary	0	0	0
Post-Primary	2	0	0
Alternative Education Provision	14	0	1
Total	11,411	0	36

WESTERN BOARD

	Bus	Metro	Railways
Controlled and Maintained Primary*	284	0	0
Controlled and Maintained Post-Primary*	2,367	0	0
Voluntary Grammar	4,978	0	0
Integrated:			
Primary	4	0	0
Post-Primary	476	0	0
Special:			
Primary Schools	6	0	0
Post-Primary Schools	130	0	0
Special Schools	0	0	0
Irish-Medium:			
Primary	2	0	0
Post-Primary	2	0	0
Alternative Education Provision	6	0	0
Total	8,255	0	0

* Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained schools.

Religious Breakdown

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to provide a religious breakdown of those attending (i) integrated primary schools; and (ii) post primary school, in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1894/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an freagra sna táblaí seo thíos.

The answer is contained in the tables below.

RELIGIOUS BREAKDOWN OF PUPILS ATTENDING INTEGRATED PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2003/04 – 2007/08

2003/04

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Protestant	Primary	327	286	734	793	421	2,561
	Post primary	620	546	995	2,132	502	4,795
Catholic	Primary	393	455	502	656	554	2,560
	Post primary	723	1,100	552	918	711	4,004
Other	Primary	145	177	356	414	204	1,296
	Post primary	167	105	282	569	155	1,278

2004/05

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Protestant	Primary	322	313	724	1,011	425	2,795
	Post primary	612	520	943	2,154	502	4,731
Catholic	Primary	364	497	552	701	557	2,671
	Post primary	707	1,073	687	921	778	4,166
Other	Primary	161	168	337	437	229	1,332
	Post primary	215	128	283	595	181	1,402

2005/06

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Protestant	Primary	314	326	718	1,033	423	2,814
	Post primary	622	513	976	2,189	515	4,815
Catholic	Primary	359	527	577	714	585	2,762
	Post primary	718	1,030	760	949	795	4,252
Other	Primary	174	194	358	485	258	1,469
	Post primary	239	158	273	583	193	1,446

2006/07

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Protestant	Primary	272	358	733	1,050	427	2,840
	Post primary	636	497	1,016	2,094	492	4,735

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Catholic	Primary	321	538	587	731	579	2,756
	Post primary	711	1,074	781	960	835	4,361
Other	Primary	254	209	394	562	276	1,695
	Post primary	239	179	325	659	228	1,630

2007/08

Religion	School Type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Protestant	Primary	297	350	770	1,046	419	2,882
	Post primary	657	516	1,189	2,094	490	4,946
Catholic	Primary	338	551	677	749	597	2,912
	Post primary	699	1,145	887	960	800	4,491
Other	Primary	239	225	467	592	303	1,826
	Post primary	243	204	434	691	238	1,810

Source: Annual school census

Note:

Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes

Integrated includes controlled integrated and grant maintained integrated.

‘Other’ includes ‘other Christian’, ‘non Christian’ and ‘religion not known/specified/none’.

Ulster-Scots Curriculum Project

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how much her Department invested in the Ulster-Scots curriculum project at Stranmillis University College; and what benefit pupils in schools have derived from it. (AQW 1908/09)

The Minister of Education: Sa bhliain 2005-06, sholáthair mo Roinn maoiniú den mhéid £48,762 don Chomhairle Churaclaim, Scrudúcháin agus Mheasúnaithe le obair a dhéanamh le hAonad Forbartha Churaclaim an Ultais i gColáiste na hOllscoile Stranmillis ar chur i láthair ábhar acmhainní bunscolaíochta na hUltaise.

In 2005-06, my Department provided funding of £48,762 to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment to work with the Curriculum Development Unit for Ulster-Scots at Stranmillis University College on the production of Ulster-Scots primary resource materials.

A report on the work of the Curriculum Development Unit, commissioned by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and published by the Education and Training Inspectorate this October, indicates that the potential benefits of the primary resource materials

have not been fully realised because of ongoing discussions between the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster-Scots Academy

Implementation Group about the standardisation of the written language: the availability of the primary materials is limited to the website of the Ulster Scots Agency.

Salary Spine Points for Qualified Teachers

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of all salary spine points for qualified teachers in the (i) North Eastern Education and Library Board; and (ii) Western Education and Library Board. (AQW 1919/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá miondealú na bpointí uilig ar an scála tuarastal do mhúinteoirí cáilithe i mBoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Iarthair agus an Oirthuaiscirt ar fáil sna táblaí thíos.

A breakdown of all salary spine points for qualified teachers in both the Western and North Eastern Education and Library Boards is provided in the enclosed tables;

WELB		NEELB	
Ordinary Pay Scale (OPS)	Teacher numbers	Ordinary Pay Scale (OPS)	Teacher numbers
Pt 1	22	Pt 1	52
Pt 2	37	Pt 2	92
Ordinary Pay Scale (OPS)	Teacher numbers	Ordinary Pay Scale (OPS)	Teacher numbers
Pt 3	73	Pt 3	106
Pt 4	71	Pt 4	147
Pt 5	105	Pt 5	153
Pt 6	202	Pt 6	275
Upper Pay Scale	Teacher numbers	Upper Pay Scale	Teacher numbers
Pt 1	211	Pt 1	382
Pt 2	326	Pt 2	414
Pt 3	1525	Pt 3	1745
Vice Principal	Teacher numbers	Vice Principal	Teacher numbers
Pt 3	4	Pt 3	4
Pt 4	5	Pt 4	4
Pt 5	10	Pt 5	16
Pt 6	11	Pt 6	13
Pt 7	13	Pt 7	19
Pt 8	12	Pt 8	11
Pt 9	14	Pt 9	27
Pt 10	17	Pt 10	15
Pt 11	15	Pt 11	12
Pt 12	12	Pt 12	12
Pt 13	6	Pt 13	12
Pt 14	9	Pt 14	4
Pt 15	6	Pt 15	7
Pt 16	7	Pt 16	10
Pt 17	4	Pt 17	2
Pt 18	4	Pt 18	3
Pt 19	2	Pt 19	2
Pt 20	5	Pt 20	7
Pt 22	1		
Principal	Teacher numbers	Principal	Teacher numbers
Pt 6	1	Pt 6	1
Pt 7	7	Pt 7	9
Pt 8	2	Pt 8	3
Pt 9	15	Pt 9	18

WELB		NEELB	
Principal	Teacher numbers	Principal	Teacher numbers
Pt 10	16	Pt 10	15
Pt 11	19	Pt 11	26
Pt 12	18	Pt 12	20
Pt 13	22	Pt 13	19
Pt 14	18	Pt 14	14
Pt 15	22	Pt 15	29
Pt 16	22	Pt 16	22
Pt 17	17	Pt 17	16
Pt 18	6	Pt 18	18
Pt 19	13	Pt 19	14
Pt 20	9	Pt 20	9
Pt 21	6	Pt 21	13
Pt 22	5	Pt 22	6
Pt 23	3	Pt 23	4
Pt 24	7	Pt 24	5
Pt 25	3	Pt 25	4
Pt 26	2	Pt 26	2
Pt 27	4	Pt 27	4
Pt 28	1	Pt 28	2
Pt 29	1	Pt 29	1
Pt 30	3	Pt 30	1
Pt 32	2	Pt 31	3
Pt 33	1	Pt 32	1

Attacks on Teaching Staff

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of attacks on teaching staff in the Larne and Carrickfergus areas. (AQW 1922/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt gur tharla 29 dteagmhas fionraíochta a bhain le hionsaithe fisiciúla ar mhúinteoirí sna scoileanna uilig laistigh de cheantair comhairle an Latharna agus an Charriag Fhearghusa. Sa bhliain acadúil reatha, go dtí an lá atá iniú ann, tugadh tuairisc ar fhionraí amháin a bhain le hionsaí fisiciúil ar mhúinteoir.

The North Eastern Education and Library Board has indicated that during the 2006/07 and 2007/08 academic years there were 29 incidents of suspension relating to physical assaults on teaching staff in all schools within the Larne and Carrickfergus district

council areas. In the current academic year there has been one reported suspension to date for a physical assault on a teacher.

Education and Library Board Chief Executives

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education how many meetings she has had with the Chief Executives of the five Education and Library Boards, since taking up office in May 2007. (AQW 1926/09)

The Minister of Education: Bhí 17 gcuinniú san iomlán agam le Príomhfheidhmeannaigh de na cúig Bhórd Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ó chuaigh mé i seilbh oifige i mí Bhealtaine 2007.

Since taking up office in May 2007, I have had a total of 17 meetings with the Chief Executives of the five Education and Library Boards.

Sickness of Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of days lost, in each of the last three years, as a result of sickness of teachers in (i) primary school; and (ii) post primary schools, and broken down by (a) Education and Library Board; and (b) school. (AQW 1934/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá socraithe agam go gcuirfean an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil.

I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Stress Related Illness of Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of days lost, in each of the last three years, as a result of stress related illness of teachers in (i) primary school; and (ii) post primary schools, and broken down by (a) Education and Library Board; and (b) school. (AQW 1935/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá socraithe agam go gcuirfean an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil.

I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Class Sizes

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the work carried out by the Department to reduce class sizes in primary schools. (AQW 1936/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn tionchar ríthábhachtach ag cailíocht an luathfhoghlaime ar dhul chun cinn san oideachas níos déanaí mar sin ó 1998 bíonn sé mar pholasáí na Roinne le ranganna na ndaltaí is oige (bliain 1-4 sa bhunscoil) a choinneáil ar 30 dalta nó níos lú ná sin.

The quality of early learning is vital to later educational progress so since 1998 the Department's policy has been to keep classes for the youngest children (years 1 to 4 of primary school) at 30 or fewer pupils. The Education and Library Boards administer this policy and are responsible for providing any additional funding to primary schools to enable the policy to be achieved. I believe it is very important to further reduce class sizes, this will require substantial investment by the Executive and I look forward to my colleagues' support on the Executive in relation to this.

Sickness Management for Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the support mechanisms in place for sickness management for teachers of (i) primary; and (ii) post primary schools. (AQW 1937/09)

The Minister of Education: A revised Teacher Attendance Procedure was implemented in April 2008 to promote a consistent approach to teacher welfare across all schools and to help schools manage teacher sickness absence. The procedure applies equally to all teachers and provides clear guidance to teachers, Principals, Boards of Governors and employing authorities on their roles and responsibilities. It is published on the Department's website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_tnc_2008-2_-_teacher_attendance_procedure_final_version.pdf

A range of welfare provision is also available to teachers in both primary and post primary schools, including the services of welfare officers, independent sessions with trained counsellors and referral to occupational health specialists.

Tá aontaithe ag na húdaráis fhostóra ar na mallaibh na seirbhísí rúnda comhairleoireachta atá ann faoi láthair a leathnú agus a chur ar fáil do gach múinteoir trí líne chabhrach teileafóin 24 uair.

The employing authorities have recently agreed to extend existing access to confidential counselling services to all teachers via a 24 hour telephone helpline.

Child Protection Policies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the Department's child protection policies. (AQW 1938/09)

The Minister of Education: The Department's current guidance for schools on child protection matters is set out in the following circulars:

- Circular 1999/10: "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection" sets out for schools and others guidance on their responsibilities in relation to child protection;
- Circular 2003/13: "Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003" explains the legal requirements in relation to a school's child protection policy;
- Circular 2006/06: "Child Protection: Recruitment of people to work with children and young people in educational settings" gives guidance for employers on pre employment checking and safer recruitment practices;
- Circular 2006/07: "Child Protection: Employment of substitute teachers" tells schools that only substitute teachers who are on the Substitute Teachers Register can be employed;
- Circular 2006/08: "Child Protection: Training requirements for School Governors on staff recruitment and selection panels" requires that at least one school governor serving on an interview panel must be trained in child protection and recruitment and selection; and
- Circular 2008/03: "Child Protection: Pre-employment checking of persons to work in schools – New arrangements" introduced the new AccessNI arrangements for pre employment checking.

Is féidir teacht ar na himlitreacha seo ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne www.deni.gov.uk agus coinnítear faoi athbhreithniú iad ar bhonn leanúnach.

These circulars can be accessed on the Department's website www.deni.gov.uk and are kept under continuous review.

Job Vacancies

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many job vacancies there are for teachers in the controlled sector. (AQW 1965/09)

The Minister of Education: The Department seeks information on teacher vacancies from all grant-aided schools on an annual basis. The information provides a "snapshot" of vacancies at a specific date each year. The latest information available identifies vacancies at 2 November 2007, and details for the controlled sector are set out below:

NO. OF VACANCIES STILL TO BE FILLED DURING THE 2007/08 ACADEMIC YEAR AT 2ND NOVEMBER 2007 IN THE CONTROLLED SECTOR

	Full-time, Permanent	Part-time, Permanent	Full-time, Temporary	Part-time, Temporary
Primary ¹	26	6	3	6
Special	6	2	1	0
Post-Primary	20	5	12	9
Total	52	13	16	15

1. Primary includes Nursery, Primary and Preparatory departments of grammar schools.

Tá an Roinn ag iarraidh sonraí ó scoileanna faoi láthair ar fholúntais múinteora atá ann ar 3 Samhain 2008.

The Department is currently seeking data from schools on teacher vacancies which exist at 3 November 2008.

Capital Schemes

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to provide details of the economic appraisals on capital schemes that have been approved by her Department, since September 2006. (AQW 1972/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá na measúnuithe eacnamaíochta do na scoileanna atá liostaithe sa tábla thíos aontaithe leis an údarás ábhartha agus faofa ó Mheán Fómhair 2006. Baineann siad seo le scoileanna ar tugadh faomhadh dóibh le haghaidh cistithe caipitil sna blianta roimhe seo.

Economic appraisals for the schools identified in the table below have been agreed with the relevant authority and approved since September 2006. These are for schools which have received approval for capital funding in previous years.

School	Date
Banbridge Academy	May 2008
Dromore Central Primary School	June 2007
Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh	March 2007
Eglinton PS	July 2007
Methodist College, Belfast	May 2007
Taughmonagh PS, Belfast	June 2007
Templepatrick PS	July 2007
Towerview PS, Bangor	October 2006
Victoria PS, Ballyhalbert	June 2007
Whitehouse PS, Newtownabbey	July 2007

The following appraisals have also been approved though the schemes do not have approval for capital funding.

School	Date
Antrim PS	June 2008
Ballywalter PS	June 2008
Kilcoan PS/ Mullaghduh PS	October 2006
Woodburn PS, Carrickfergus	January 2008

In addition, the full business case for the BELB Strategic Partnership Project was approved in March 2008 with funding approval for the following schools:-

- Ashfield Girls High School
- Belfast Boys' Model School
- Belfast Model School for Girls
- Grosvenor Grammar
- Orangefield Primary School

Capital Works Scheme

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to provide an update on the economic appraisal that has been submitted to her Department on to the capital works scheme for Academy Primary School in Saintfield. (AQW 1973/09)

The Minister of Education: Chuir Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt dréacht-bhreithmheas eacnamaíochta (EA) do Academy Primary School faoi bhráid na Roinne in Eanáir 2008.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board submitted a draft economic appraisal (EA) to the Department for Academy Primary School in January 2008. The submission however was premature as before an appraisal is completed the need for a capital scheme has to be assessed using information on the condition and suitability of the building. The department is currently considering the information on the school and will be liaising with the SEELB on the next steps.

Communication and Interaction Special Educational Needs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children have an identified speech, language or communication need, in each Education and Library Board. (AQW 2118/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sa tábla thíos.

The information requested is contained in the table below.

Pupils with an identified communication and interaction Special Educational Need – 2007/08

School Level	ELB					Total
	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Nursery schools	149	129	167	209	57	711
Primary	939	1,334	1,016	1,228	1,240	5,757
Post primary	257	337	287	298	472	1,651
Special	535	492	675	672	349	2,723
Total	1,880	2,292	2,145	2,407	2,118	10,842

Source: school census in the north of Ireland

Note:

1. Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. The communication and interaction Special Educational Need type also includes speech and language difficulties, autism and Aspergers.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Sector Skills Councils

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the Sector Skills Councils that have received funding from his Department through the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils; (ii) the amounts received; (iii) the activities the councils are running to promote understanding of their work amongst (a) employers; (b) employer organisations; and (c) other stakeholders. (AQW 1539/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey):

- (i) The Department for Employment and Learning does not provide funding to Sector Skills Councils through the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.
- (ii) The Department provides direct funding to the Sector Skills Councils to undertake relevant Northern Ireland projects. In a recent bidding round, the Department agreed to support 28 new projects, totalling £571, 987. The Department has also provided funding of £96,000 to support

Alliance activities in Northern Ireland between 1st August 2008 and 31st March 2009.

(iii) (a) Sector Skills Councils use a range of activities to promote understanding of their work amongst employers. Examples of this work include:

- Attending relevant seminars and conferences; giving presentations; manning exhibition stands and distributing marketing literature;
- Attending Northern Ireland employer Country Groups;
- Regular contact with the six employer-led Workforce Development Forums.

(b) Sector Skills Councils have established large electronic databases of employers, trade organisations and other partners and use this resource to promote regular updates via electronic and hard-copy material such as policy updates, case studies and new initiatives. They also work directly with employer organisations by attending meetings, workshops, and seminars.

(c) The Sector Skills Councils have regular contact and exchange of information with key stakeholders, and they work collectively through the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils to promote their activities. One of the key roles of the Alliance is to build awareness of the activities of the Sector Skills Councils, through the development of promotional material, and participation in conferences, seminars, road-shows and exhibitions.

Sector Skills Councils

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to (i) detail how many Sector Skills Agreements have been launched during 2008; (ii) detail the funding his Department is providing for the agreements; and (iii) confirm if his Department's work with the Sector Skills Councils will reach the stated target of 25 agreements by December 2008.

(AQW 1541/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

- (i) In 2008, eight Sector Skills Agreements were officially approved by the Northern Ireland Project Board. This brings the total number of Sector Skills Agreements approved to twenty-three.
- (ii) The Department does not fund the Sector Skills Agreements process as this is core business for the Sector Skills Councils and is funded by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The Department did, however, provide funding for the production of Northern Ireland Labour

Market Information to inform some of the Sector Skills Agreements. In a recent bidding round the Department agreed to fund twenty-eight projects, taking forward Northern Ireland actions identified in the Agreements.

- (iii) At present twenty-three of the twenty-five Sector Skills Agreements have been approved by the Northern Ireland Project Board. It is expected that the remaining two will be approved by the end of December 2008.

Education Campuses

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if all third level education campuses operate an equality agenda in their student union.

(AQW 1552/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

Under legislation such as Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, all third level institutions are required to ensure equality of opportunity in their respective campuses, including their student unions.

Education Campuses

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if all third level education campuses operate a shared space agenda in their student union.

(AQW 1553/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: I

understand that all third level campuses are already operating shared space agendas in their respective student unions. Each institution has in place policies and procedures governing the shared use of student union facilities. These are detailed in the respective student union's constitution, which also details the rights and privileges of their members.

Education Campuses

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he will ensure that all third level education campuses operate a shared space and equality agenda in their student union. (AQW 1554/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

Under legislation such as Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, all third level institutions are required to ensure equality of opportunity in their respective campuses, including their student unions. I understand all third level campuses are already operating shared space and equality agendas in their student unions.

Student Loans

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many graduates from Northern Ireland are deferring payment on their student loans because their current level of income is below the repayment threshold. (AQW 1579/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The number of Northern Ireland students who have deferred repayments on mortgage style loans because their income level is below the current repayment threshold of £25,936 per annum, is 7,274.

Income contingent loans replaced mortgage style loans in academic year 1998/1999. Latest figures from the Student Loans Company show that the number of Northern Ireland students not in a repayment channel because their earnings are below the repayment threshold of £15,000 per annum is 9,757.

Training for Success Initiative

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the discussions his Department has had with young people with disabilities or interested groups, on the roll out of the Department's Training for Success initiative. (AQW 1615/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The Department meets regularly with organisations, who provide specialist support on its Training for Success initiative, including Disability Action, Sensory Learning Support and the Cedar Foundation.

I have also had the opportunity to meet young people associated with Dr B's Kitchen, Include Youth and the Bytes Project. This includes young people with disabilities and additional needs.

As you are aware, the Training for Success Disability Working Group presented its report recently. In its review, the Group undertook a survey of young people with disabilities in a 16 to 24 age range. In addition, the Group held consultation meetings with a number of key stakeholders, including disability organisations that represent the interests of young people with disabilities.

In its report, the Group encourages the Department to engage directly with young people with disabilities. They see this as crucial to the success of the provision, in gathering their views and concerns in order to determine how the provision is meeting their learning and support requirements.

As I outlined in my letter to you of 13 October 2008, I will write to you again outlining the way forward once I have had the opportunity to consider the Group's recommendations.

Forensic Psychologists

Dr Farry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans his Department has to provide training courses for forensic psychologists. (AQW 1710/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The University of Ulster advises that a working group comprising representatives from the University's School of Psychology, the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Psychological Society and stakeholders from the Forensic community are currently involved in a series of meetings to explore the feasibility of postgraduate training in Forensic Psychology. The group has met on three occasions during 2008. As a first step the group has agreed to run a jointly sponsored Forensic Psychology event to publicise what Forensic psychology can offer potential employers and agencies in the region. This will take place in the spring of 2009.

In the context of these discussions, the School of Psychology is considering the development of a fully accredited Postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Forensic Psychology.

Queen's University advises that its School of Psychology is planning a major expansion of postgraduate taught courses and, subject to satisfactory planning and business cases, Forensic Psychology is one option being considered for delivery.

Acute Learning Disabilities

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to help those with acute learning disabilities to find sustainable employment. (AQW 1743/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The Department for Employment and Learning has a range of assistance to help people with disabilities, including severe learning disabilities, find and keep employment. This assistance is not targeted at people with specific disabilities. Pathways to Work Personal Advisers and Team Leaders based in Jobs & Benefits Offices/Jobcentres are trained to help customers find suitable jobs and identify support to help keep the job. Advisers have a menu of programmes and services to assist customers, which includes: assessment by Department's Occupational Psychologists; a Work Preparation Programme; Permitted Work; Access to Work (NI), and; Workable (NI). Programmes and services have been designed to be flexible to meet individually assessed client needs.

The Department also assists people with disabilities through funding from the European Social Fund Programme 2007-13 which helps unemployed people at a disadvantage in the labour market, into sustainable

employment. A total of 14 projects for participants with disabilities and health conditions, were successful and have been awarded £18.5m for 3 years ending 31 March 2011. While this includes people with acute learning disabilities, there is no dedicated allocation of funding for specific target groups.

Construction Trade

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what procedures his Department has put in place to ensure that apprentices can complete their training given the current down-turn in the construction trade. (AQW 1807/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: The construction industry in Northern Ireland is currently facing a downturn, particularly in the housing market. Nevertheless, the Department will continue to fund training in construction occupations to support the industry according to need highlighted with the Sector Skills Council.

The Department has received evidence of some 230 apprentices at the six FE Colleges having been made redundant. This would represent about 4% of the total apprentices currently on programme. 164 of these people were in construction training. However, when compared to the same period last year, the level of early leavers that could be attributed to reasons such as unemployment, is not significantly different.

Under Training for Success, the Pre-Apprenticeship training component is designed for young people aged 16 to 18 who have been assessed as capable of undertaking a Level 2 Apprenticeship, but have not yet found employment. This training component can also accommodate any eligible Level 2 apprentices who have been made redundant, but who wish to continue working towards achieving a professional and technical qualification. Alternatively, they can undertake skills training and qualifications in a different occupational area, if they so choose.

The Department is currently considering introducing other alternative arrangements to ensure that both Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices can continue with training, and we hope to be in a position to make a formal announcement on these plans shortly.

Trade Apprentices

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact the current economic downturn is having on the ability of trade apprentices to commence or complete their apprenticeships; and what actions his Department is

taking to ensure that apprenticeships are still available. (AQW 1843/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: Certain industries in Northern Ireland are facing a downturn.

The Department has received evidence of some 230 apprentices at the six FE Colleges having been made redundant. This would represent about 4% of the total apprentices currently on programme. 164 of these people were in construction training. However, when compared to the same period last year, the level of early leavers that could be attributed to reasons such as unemployment, is not significantly different.

Where the economic downturn appears to be having greater effect is in the recruitment of new apprentices to undertake training, where certain sectors are reporting a reduction of 50% or more.

Under Training for Success, however, the Pre-Apprenticeship training component is designed for young people aged 16 to 18 who have been assessed as capable of undertaking a Level 2 Apprenticeship, but have not yet found employment. This training component can also accommodate any eligible Level 2 apprentices who have been made redundant and who wish to continue working towards achieving a professional and technical qualification. Alternatively, they can undertake skills training and qualifications in a different occupational area, if they so choose.

For older apprentices that become unemployed, the Department is considering options that will allow them to gain work experience while maintaining their eligibility to claim benefits. This may include a placement under Steps to Work.

Some further work is required on developing these options and I hope to make an announcement on these soon.

St Mary's University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the representatives on the Board of Governors of St Mary's University College from (i) the Catholic Church; and (ii) the Protestant Churches. (AQW 1898/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: St Mary's University College have advised that (i) the following members of the College's Board of Governors are from the Catholic Church:

The Bishop of Down and Connor : The Most Rev Dr Noel Treanor (Chairman)

One of his Vicar Generals : The Most Rev Donal McKeown

Irish Regional Vicar, Cabra Dominicans : Sr Lucina Montague OP

Six Governors are nominated by the Trustees of the College

- Archdiocese of Armagh : Rt Rev Mgr Liam McEntegart PP
- Dioceses of Clogher / Kilmore : Mrs Joan Hart
- Diocese of Derry : Very Rev Robert Devine PP
- Diocese of Down and Connor : Mr Charles MacCreanor
- Diocese of Dromore : Mrs Ann Doran
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) : Rt Rev Mgr Colm McCaughan

(ii) There are no representatives on the Board of Governors from the Protestant Churches.

Teacher Training

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what the ratio is for teacher training between Protestants and Catholics, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1901/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: The percentages of Protestant and Catholic students enrolled on initial teacher training courses at Northern Ireland Higher Education institutions, whose religious affiliation was known, in each of the last 3 available years are detailed in the table below:

	Protestant	Catholic
2004/05	54%	46%
2005/06	49%	51%
2006/07	47%	53%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes: Percentages are based on figures that have been rounded to the nearest 5 and include those initial teacher training enrolments at Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College.

Responses to religious affiliation questions are not mandatory and therefore these questions have high non-response rates (17% in 2004/05, 10% in 2005/06 and 9% in 2006/07 for students on initial teacher training courses at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions).

St Mary's University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what percentage of students at St Mary's University College have a Protestant background. (AQW 1902/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2006/07 academic year, 1.5% of students at St. Mary's University College, whose religious affiliation was known, had a Protestant background.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes: Percentages are based on figures that have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Responses to religious affiliation questions are not mandatory and therefore these questions have high non-response rates (12% for students at St. Mary's University College in 2006/07).

St Mary's University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many lecturers in St Mary's University College have a Protestant background. (AQW 1905/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: St Mary's University College advises that there are currently five lecturers employed who have indicated from Equal Opportunities monitoring that they are from a Protestant background.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what percentage of students at Stranmillis University College have a Catholic background. (AQW 1906/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2006/07 academic year, 16.5% of students at Stranmillis University College, whose religious affiliation was known, had a Catholic background.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes: Percentages are based on figures that have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Responses to religious affiliation questions are not mandatory and therefore these questions have high non-response rates (13% for students at Stranmillis University College in 2006/07).

Teacher Training

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many teacher training places there have

been in Stranmillis University College in each of the last 4 years. (AQW 1960/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The number of teacher training places funded by my Department in Stranmillis University College, in each of the last 4 academic years, has been:

	B.Ed	PGCE	Total
2005/06	792	40	832
2006/07	739	30	769
2007/08	674	20	694
2008/09	615	15	630

The Department of Education is responsible for setting the annual Initial Teacher Education (ITE) student intake numbers for each institution.

Teacher Training

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many teacher training places there have been in St Mary's University College in each of the last 4 years. (AQW 1961/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The number of teacher training places funded by my Department in St Mary's University College, in each of the last 4 academic years, has been:

	B.Ed	PGCE	Total
2005/06	769	16	785
2006/07	732	16	748
2007/08	632	16	648
2008/09	591	22	613

The Department of Education is responsible for setting the annual Initial Teacher Education (ITE) student intake numbers for each institution.

Teacher Training

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many teacher training places there have been at Queen's University Belfast, in each of the last 4 years. (AQW 1962/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

The number of teacher training places funded by my Department at Queen's University Belfast, in each of the last 4 academic years, has been:

	B.Ed	PGCE	Total
2005/06	-	205	205
2006/07	-	205	205
2007/08	-	193	193
2008/09	-	181	181

The Department of Education is responsible for setting the annual Initial Teacher Education (ITE) student intake numbers for each institution.

Concessionary Fees

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he intends to discuss with his counterpart in Scotland, Wales and Westminster. reinstating concessionary fees for all pensioners who register for courses at further education colleges in the UK. (AQW 1971/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

As you know through recent correspondence, I have considerable sympathy with the issue you have raised. However, as I indicated in my letter of 20 October 2008 to you, the UK is currently considering a European Directive that would extend age discrimination to the provision of goods, facilities and services. This would bring the treatment of these services more into line with the current Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. Therefore, the outcome of these considerations is likely to have an impact on any changes that might be made to the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations.

I have already had discussions with my Westminster Counterpart, Mr Bill Rammell and I have asked my officials to monitor developments in these areas in the UK, and to keep me informed of the position on a regular basis.

Pathway Personal Advisers

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 361/09, which agency or group provides the training to Pathway Personal Advisers; and, in the absence of medical training or qualifications on what basis does a Personal Adviser (i) decide to signpost a client to particular support; and (ii) assess the support that would benefit a client most. (AQW 1982/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

Training for Pathways Personal Advisers is provided by the Department's Staff Development Unit supported where appropriate, by the Occupational Psychology Service, Medical Support Services and contracted specialists. Pathways Personal Advisers are trained to

explore with clients their prospects of returning to work at a series of up to six work-focused interviews. (i) Decisions to signpost a client to a particular support are based on information the client provides in the course of an interview and the knowledge gained through training; and (ii) assessing the support that would benefit a client most is also based on the information the client provides in the course of an interview and the knowledge gained through training. At no time are clients compelled to avail of any particular support: participation in any work-related activity or seeking further medical intervention is voluntary.

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Tourism Targets

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in light of the current economic climate, what measures are in place to ensure that tourism targets are met. (AQW 1421/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Despite the current economic climate, the strategic direction for tourism remains unchanged.

In the short term we are taking a number of measures to address the challenges of the current economic climate. These include:

- Ensuring quality and value for money – these will be key determinants of success, offering competitive advantage;
- Increasing the E-marketing role such as discovernorthernireland.com;
- Developing further the closer to home markets which have the greatest potential to offer a return on investment;
- Taking advantage of the strength of the Euro - the strong Euro offers a competitive advantage for residents and international visitors in the Republic of Ireland and European markets with direct access routes;
- Holidaying in the sterling zone is currently more attractive for the Great Britain market
- Targetting of local companies to host major conferences at home; and
- The potential of the resident population for both day trips and holidays at home must also be maximised

Northern Ireland Tourist Board will continue to focus on the delivery of its Corporate Plan objectives to ensure the development of a long term sustainable tourism industry for Northern Ireland.

Tourism Ireland will continue to partner NITB and Northern Ireland industry effectively to market our way through current and forthcoming difficulties.

Tourism Ireland will also deliver world-class marketing programmes in 2009 to ensure that Northern Ireland achieves competitive standout in key markets despite the challenges.

Experience shows that maintaining a strong marketing presence during uncertain times, pays dividend. By 2007, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were among only a few European destinations to have recovered fully from the downturn in travel from the US which followed the 9/11 attacks. Tourism Ireland's strategy is to maintain its promotional presence in major markets during this period to ensure that Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland, is well positioned for recovery when consumer confidence resumes.

Invest NI

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for (i) a timescale; and (ii) terms of reference, in relation to a review of Invest NI. (AQW 1496/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the review have been developed and the overall aim is to ensure that DETI and Invest NI policies and programmes are targeted to help achieve the goals outlined in the Programme for Government. The current project brief in the draft ToR indicates that the review would need to consider and make recommendations in the following areas:

- (a) The current and forecasted performance of the Northern Ireland economy, relative to other regions with access to similar policy instruments, programmes and resources;
- (b) Current DETI/Invest NI policies and programmes, with an assessment of their effectiveness in stimulating productivity improvements, particularly within manufacturing and private services;
- (c) Policy options to stimulate economic growth / productivity and build a larger and more wealth creating private sector, particularly in financial and value added business services;
- (d) How NI can further attract value added FDI and promote domestic investment;
- (e) Review and advise on the structure and remit of Invest NI and the existing governance arrangements between DETI, DFP and Invest NI;

- (f) Identify any issues which may inhibit the delivery of the productivity goal which fall to other Departments in the NI Executive, particularly DEL (in relation to skills) and DRD (in relation to regional planning and infrastructure investment);
- (g) Consider the optimal way by which the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment engages with key stakeholders on economic development issues; and
- (h) Consider whether any improvements could be made to DETI and Invest NI's working links within the NI Executive and on an east/west and north/south basis.
- (i) The sub-regional distribution of inward investment and the effectiveness of policy in encouraging the location of investment.

The draft ToR have been shared with both the Executive and the ETI Committee. These are being finalised following the Committee's response of 21st October 2008. The Department is also currently working on the practical arrangements necessary to establish the review, including membership of the Review Panel. Once the Panel is established, a programme of work and associated timescales will be agreed.

Invest NI

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the body that will conduct a review of Invest NI. (AQW 1497/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department is currently working on the practical arrangements necessary to establish the review, including the membership of the review panel. This is an important exercise that will advise on current and future economic development policy in Northern Ireland. I am therefore seeking to appoint high calibre individuals with relevant experience and expertise.

Invest NI

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to report on how the additionality of the efforts of Invest NI is measured in relation to decisions on investment. (AQW 1525/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Additionality is a key criterion in Invest NI's decision on whether or not to support an investment and in determining the amount of support offered.

Any company seeking financial assistance must demonstrate that Invest NI support is essential to enable their investment project to proceed. Additionality

may also be satisfied where Invest NI assistance can influence the proposed nature, scale, timing or location of a project. Invest NI provides the minimum support necessary for the project to proceed.

Invest NI subjects all applications for support to an appraisal and approval process commensurate with the level of funds sought and the risk associated with the proposed investment project. For example:

- All projects seeking support in excess of £250,000 are subjected to a full commercial or economic appraisal conducted either by Invest NI's Corporate Finance Appraisal & Advisory Division (CFAAD) or by an independent third party;
- Professional economist advice is incorporated into all submissions for support over £1 million, ensuring HM Treasury guidance is adhered to; and,
- Invest NI and the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment must secure the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel for internationally mobile investment projects where support exceeds £10 million and for non-mobile projects where support exceeds £6 million.

As well as the consideration of additionality at project appraisal, Invest NI schemes of support are subject to regular evaluation to ensure that they are necessary and that they are delivered in the most appropriate and cost-effective manner.

Inventors of New Technology

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline what assistance, both financial and otherwise, is available to inventors of new technology. (AQW 1556/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI recognises the importance of technological innovation and offers a broad range of professional advice and financial incentives to support individual inventors, businesses and academic researchers wishing to develop new ideas and inventions.

Incentives include support for research and development, technology transfer and the provision of a venture capital fund focussed specifically on early stage technology ventures. Invest NI also provides specialist Intellectual Property advice covering Patents, Registered Design, Trade Marks and Copyright.

Ferry Companies

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations she has made to ferry companies in relation to the cost of ferry crossings between Northern Ireland and Great Britain

compared to the cost of equivalent services between Great Britain and France. (AQW 1573/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:

The ferry services which operate between Northern Ireland and Great Britain are provided by private sector companies and fare levels are a matter for their commercial judgement. I have not made representations to the ferry companies.

GAA Games

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what significant GAA games have been featured on the Northern Ireland Tourist Board website, in each of the last 10 years. (AQW 1642/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) features events and sporting activities on its website when it is notified of these, when they are likely to be relevant to tourists and consistent with NITB's corporate plans and objectives and when they are of national and international prominence.

NITB retains full editorial control of its website and the information it carries. Sporting events of national and international prominence which the GAA consider might be included on NITB's website should be forwarded to NITB by e-mailing events@nitb.com.

NITB has received no communication from the GAA about sporting events which the GAA considers may be of interest to tourists and thus no Gaelic games have been featured on its consumer website.

Ferry Companies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if her Department has any powers to regulate the prices charged by ferry companies travelling to Scotland. (AQW 1647/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:

The ferry services which operate between Northern Ireland and Scotland are provided by private sector companies and fare levels are a matter for their commercial judgement. My Department does not have a regulatory role in respect of the level of fares set by the private sector ferry companies.

Data Sharing Between Government Agencies

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the potential for data sharing between government agencies and utilities to facilitate a pricing structure that better

reflects the consumers' ability to pay for electricity, gas and water. (AQW 1783/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: My Department does not currently hold relevant personal data which could be utilised to assist the utility companies in devising a pricing structure which reflects the consumers' ability to pay for electricity and gas.

However my Department works in co-operation with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR), and the respective energy companies in establishing ways for customers to avail of the most appropriate payment method, and to reduce their overall energy use through a number of practical energy saving schemes. All of the energy utility companies have put in place a number of initiatives to help ensure each customer's billing structure best reflects their financial circumstances, eg. customers can avail of pre-payment meters for gas and electricity, and other appropriate discounts.

The Department for Regional Development (DRD) is responsible for Northern Ireland Water, and advises that in preparation for the planned introduction of domestic charging in April 2007, NI Water obtained property address details from the (then) Valuation and Lands Agency. In addition, domestic customer details were obtained on a "one off" basis from the (then) Rate Collection Agency. To service the Affordability Tariff, which was part of the original domestic charging proposals, recipients of Housing Benefit and Rate Relief would have automatically qualified for the reduced tariff for low income customers.

DRD also advises that following the deferral of domestic charging in April 2007, Northern Ireland Water no longer has the benefit of legislation to update the domestic customer database through data sharing with Land and Property Services. In the event of additional household payments going ahead, a future Affordability Tariff could be serviced through data sharing for benefit claimants under Article 264 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006.

There may be potential for other Departments to share data with the utility providers. For example the DSD Fuel Poverty Taskforce is at the very early stages of examining the possibility of legislation to permit it to more effectively share benefit related data, in order to establish how any initiatives to assist the fuel poor might be targeted.

However, in any circumstance, the sharing of personal data can only be facilitated within the confines of the relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act, and this may limit the potential for greater sharing of information.

Executive Meetings

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to her answer to AQO640/09, how the Executive's failure to meet is impacting on her efforts to promote investment from the United States of America. (AQW 1787/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: We know from our discussions with potential overseas investors that economic and political stability is an important issue and investors will take an interest in the current status of the Executive.

However Invest Northern Ireland's international sales and marketing emphasis is to promote all areas of Northern Ireland as an attractive and viable location for new inward investment opportunities, in what is a very competitive global market.

As part of my personal efforts, I travelled to both East and West Coasts of the US in October, where I took the opportunity to meet with potential investors and follow up with attendees of May's USNI conference. On the West Coast I participated in Invest NI's 'Trade Mission to USA - 26-31 October'. The companies on this mission were representative of Northern Ireland's innovative and diversified industrial base.

Invest Northern Ireland is conscious of the importance of global economic conditions and remain confident that the Northern Ireland business proposition is a highly-competitive alternative to other regions of the British Isles or Western Europe.

Although the growing uncertainty and global economic downturn means many companies are tightening their belts and are increasingly focused on cost containment and deferring investment decisions; several firms in the region are firmly focused on opportunities for continued growth and new projects. Recent announcements reflect US companies' belief in the competitive proposition that NI has to offer. Be assured that the Northern Ireland value proposition will continue to be promoted strongly to potential investors in all its markets.

Environmental and Rural Development Fund

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to (i) confirm that on 27 February 2006 the Northern Ireland Secretary of State launched a £59.2m Environmental and Rural Development Fund for promoting the development and use of renewable energy; and (ii) provide a breakdown of how her Department directed this allocation. (AQW 1904/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: I can confirm that the former Secretary of State, Peter Hain, launched the £59.2m Environment and Renewable Energy Fund (EREF) on 27th February 2006. The objective of the Fund was to enhance and accelerate renewables development in Northern Ireland.

A breakdown of the funding allocation is attached below:-

Department/ Project	Allocation (£ million)
DETI	
Carbon Trust activities	2.128
Energy from Waste flagship projects (figure shown represents a transfer of £2m to DSD in year)	16
Energy Research programmes	1.5
Integrated Communications Strategy	1.119
Action Renewables	2.267
Departmental running costs	0.216
Reconnect (including management costs)	8.463
DSD	
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in social housing (housing associations)	0.5
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in social housing (NIHE) (includes £2m transferred from DETI)	5.2
Energy Efficiency in private housing (Warm Homes)	9.8
Renewable Energy for Fuel poverty owner occupiers	1.295
DFP	
Government Office estate – biomass boiler on Stormont Estate and PV/Solar on government buildings	3.1
Central Energy Efficiency Fund	2.83
DARD	
Renewable Energy Centre of Excellence AFBI Hillsborough	2.345
Bioenergy research, technology transfer and commercial demonstration at farm level Demonstration (CAFRE)	1.852
DOE	
Ecological Footprint	0.285
OFMDFM	
Sustainable Development Communications Strategy	0.300
TOTAL	59.2

ENVIRONMENT

Student Housing

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration he has given to an inter-departmental strategy for developing purpose built student housing to alleviate problems associated with houses of multiple occupancy, in areas such as South Belfast.

(AQW 1612/09)

The Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson):

My predecessor, Arlene Foster, visited the Holylands area in South Belfast with you and heard at first hand some of the issues facing the community, including the adverse impact that HMOs can have on an area.

The issues surrounding HMOs are multi-faceted and cannot be tackled by one Department or Agency. Arlene Foster has endorsed the joint working approach of the Inter Agency Group which was set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive of Belfast City Council. I agree that a multi agency approach is necessary and that, through the Inter Agency Group, Planning Service can make a significant contribution to addressing a range of issues in the Holylands area.

As part of its contribution to the Inter Agency Group, Planning Service has undertaken consultation on a Draft HMO Subject Plan for Belfast aimed at addressing a range of issues. Work is progressing on the Subject Plan and it is hoped it will be formally adopted later this year.

Arlene Foster made a statement on 12 June 2008 outlining further steps she would consider in order to further consolidate this policy framework. One step related to purpose built student housing and she stated that she would enter into discussions with Ministerial colleagues with a view to the establishment of an inter-departmental group to examine the scope for alternative student accommodation and thereby further reduce the current number of HMOs in areas such as the Holylands. I would intend to build further on the work that has already been undertaken and to enter into discussions as is considered appropriate.

My colleague, the Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey, has indicated that Queen's University, the University of Ulster and Stranmillis University College already provide purpose built student accommodation on, or near, their respective campuses. The University of Ulster in particular, contends that it cannot compel students to live on-campus. Research conducted by the University has shown that students who live in private rented accommodation have made a positive choice to do so because of their desire for independence. The respective institutions

also report that their accommodation does not operate at full occupancy.

Finally, I would agree with the Minister for Employment and Learning that whilst responsibility for Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) rests with the Department for Social Development, my Department is also content to be involved in the development of any inter-departmental strategy on this issue.

Québec Driving Licence

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment if he is aware that arrangements with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), whereby drivers from Northern Ireland did not have to take a further driving test to be issued with a Québec driving licence, have collapsed, putting Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) registered drivers at a disadvantage compared with other UK drivers; and to detail (i) how this problem arose; and (ii) the action he is taking to restore the benefits previously afforded to DVA registered drivers.

(AQW 1636/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There are no reciprocal licence exchange arrangements between Northern Ireland and any of the provinces and territories of Canada. Until recently, the legal powers relating to licence exchange in Northern Ireland were such that, if Canada were to be designated, the Department would be obliged to accept all Canadian licences tendered for exchange. However, although it is generally accepted that the driving standards in Canada are similar to those in Northern Ireland, it was not considered desirable to accept all Canadian licences, as Canadian driving licences did not indicate whether a person had passed a driving test in a car equipped with automatic transmission, or if the licence had been issued in exchange for one originating in a country which may not have been assessed against Northern Ireland's strict standards. Great Britain has, in contrast, amended its powers of designation, and is able to exclude certain licences from the exchange arrangements.

The necessary primary power to amend the Northern Ireland system of designation for licensing purposes was brought into force on 15th November 2007. However, before this power can be made effective, additional legislation is required, in the form of a Designation Order. The Department is now in the process of preparing legislation to bring Northern Ireland into line with the arrangements that exist for Great Britain licence holders. It is planned that the Designation Order will be in force in Spring 2009.

The Designation Order will allow DVA to enter into bilateral reciprocity agreements with the same provinces and territories as have negotiated

agreements with DVLA in Great Britain. Once in place, both the Northern Ireland and Canadian driver licensing authorities will be in a position to begin the exchange process, subject to a range of conditions being met.

Climate Change

Dr Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to clarify if the assessment given on the causes of climate change in his answer to AQW 181/09 is his own, or that of his Department. (AQW 1652/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The assessment given in my answer to AQW 181/09 is mine. My Departmental officials' role is to provide me, as the Minister, with considered and balanced advice on policy issues which I can then use, together with any other information that I consider pertinent.

Loss of Moorland

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with environmentalists in relation to the loss of moorland and the effect this is having on increasing Northern Ireland's carbon footprint. (AQW 1653/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Peatland and Upland Biodiversity Delivery Group (BDG) is a cross-sectoral group established and chaired by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to help maintain the area and improve the condition of moorland habitats included in the Northern Ireland Habitat Action Plans. The BDG includes representatives from Queens University Belfast, the Committee for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Ulster Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Peatlands are large stores of organic matter that also function as carbon stores. This has been recognised by BDG. NIEA has recently joined the DEFRA Peat Partnership Project, a major collaborative UK wide project assessing the biodiversity and environmental benefits of conserving moorland and peatlands.

Loss of Moorland

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with landowners to encourage the retention and preservation of (i) heath land; and (ii) moorland, to reduce Northern Ireland's carbon footprint. (AQW 1655/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The main point of contact between the Department of the Environment and heathland and moorland landowners is through the declaration of Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In these situations landowners are encouraged to manage their land sensitively and with a view to preserving the peatland.

While peatlands on heathland and moorland do form significant carbon stores, ASSIs are declared primarily to protect habitats and the biodiversity they support.

Antrim Castle

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to make a statement on the collapse of the walls at Antrim Castle; and to detail (i) the information held by his Department explaining the collapse; and (ii) the investigations that are on going. (AQW 1667/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The walls at the Castle are scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. Under the terms of that Order, it remains the responsibility of the owner, in this case Antrim Borough Council, to care for the monument. That would include commissioning any report on the cause of the collapse. It is also the owner's responsibility to undertake any remedial works. At this stage, the Department does not have information explaining why the wall collapsed. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) awaits the outcome of investigations that are underway by Antrim Borough Council and will provide advice, and, as appropriate, grant Scheduling Monument Consent for any agreed programme of remedial works.

Disposal of Used Batteries

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to provide more facilities for the disposal of used batteries. (AQW 1681/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department is due to consult in December on UK wide regulations transposing the Batteries Directive. The Regulations will require retailers to take back waste portable batteries and battery producers to take back other waste batteries.

The Regulations are scheduled to be made in spring 2009 and once implemented the number of collection points for waste batteries in Northern Ireland will increase. Collection targets placed on battery producers will mean that facilities for waste batteries

are likely to be set up at civic amenity sites, at retail outlets and in many public buildings.

Litter Fines

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of litter fines that have been issued; and (ii) the monetary value of these fines, in each of the last 5 years, broken down by council area. (AQW 1723/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department does not hold the information requested for the 2003/04 year. The number of fixed penalty notices issued for litter offences together with the monetary value of those notices for the next 4 years is set out in the table below. The Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994, as amended, specifies the amount of the fixed penalty as £50.

Council	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Antrim BC	6 (£300)	25 (£1250)	7 (£350)	17 (£850)
Ards BC	25 (£1250)	26 (£1300)	26 (£1300)	12 (£600)
Armagh City & DC	15 (£750)	45 (£2250)	31 (£1550)	13 (£650)
Ballymena BC	38 (£1900)	42 (£2100)	13 (£650)	26 (£1300)
Ballymoney BC	1 (£50)	41 (£2050)	68 (£3400)	17 (£850)
Banbridge DC	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	2 (£100)	13 (£650)
Belfast CC	1146 (£57300)	1557 (£77850)	1174 (£58700)	1790 (£89500)
Carrickfergus BC	16 (£800)	3 (£150)	17 (£850)	18 (£900)
Castlereagh BC	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	20 (£1000)
Coleraine BC	76 (£3800)	62 (£3100)	74 (£3700)	X
Cookstown DC	11 (£550)	6 (£300)	62 (£3100)	44 (£2200)
Craigavon BC	X	85 (£4250)	192 (£9600)	349 (£17450)
Derry CC	11 (£550)	67 (£3350)	63 (£3150)	X
Down DC	1 (£50)	1 (£50)	9 (£450)	22 (£1100)
Dungannon & South Tyrone BC	0 (£0)	4 (£200)	0 (£0)	3 (£150)
Fermanagh DC	X	X	X	X
Larne BC	30 (£1500)	63 (£3150)	50 (£2500)	197 (£9850)
Limavady BC	9 (£450)	8 (£400)	9 (£450)	5 (£250)
Lisburn CC	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	6 (£300)	7 (£350)
Magherafelt DC	9 (£450)	22 (£1100)	17 (£850)	17 (£850)
Moyle DC	2 (£100)	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	2 (£100)

Council	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Newry & Mourne DC	21 (£1050)	18 (£900)	24 (£1200)	24 (£1200)
Newtownabbey BC	8 (£400)	2 (£100)	42 (£2100)	117 (£5850)
North Down BC	7 (£350)	22 (£1100)	24 (£1200)	23 (£1150)
Omagh DC	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	X	60 (£3000)
Strabane DC	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	0 (£0)	0 (£0)

Note: X = information not held by the Department

MOT Tests

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he has taken to promote the penalties associated with driving a vehicle without tax or a MOT test certificate. (AQW 1731/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The enforcement of non compliance with vehicle testing is a matter for the police through either the fixed penalty procedure or by prosecution. The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) issue reminders to vehicle keepers when their vehicle first requires a test certificate or their certificate needs to be renewed. More recently, the Agency introduced mandatory display of vehicle test certificates to promote compliance and make detection of non compliance easier. A publicity campaign detailing the penalties associated with non display of discs was conducted as part of the introduction of mandatory display.

DVA also issues reminders to the keepers of vehicles about 3 weeks before their tax discs expire and these reminders point out that vehicles must be licensed and also give further details of the penalties for using a vehicle on the road if a statutory off road notification (SORN) is in force. The Agency also runs television, radio and billboard advertising campaigns regularly warning motorists about the consequences of failing to have a tax disc.

In addition, DVA employs a number of highly visible measures to detect non-complying vehicles. The Agency participates in a UK-wide contract with NCP for the detection, clamping and removal of unlicensed vehicles and also operates a number of camera detection units. High profile joint operations have been carried out with the police, including “Operation Evader” in Belfast in September during which 320 unlicensed vehicles were clamped.

Road Safety

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the importance of the MOT test in relation to road safety. (AQW 1732/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The purpose of the vehicle test, commonly known as the MOT test, is to ensure that vehicles that are subject to this test (such as cars and motor cycles) meet minimum EU environmental and road safety standards. Such vehicles must comply with the key performance requirements in the Construction and Use and Lighting Regulations.

Possession of a current vehicle certificate does not of course mean that the vehicle is roadworthy for the life of the certificate. It is not therefore a substitute for regular maintenance, although the requirement for the test does encourage motorists to maintain their vehicles.

Nonetheless, evidence suggests that the existence of a vehicle testing system like the MOT has a significant impact on road safety. Studies have suggested that 4-5% of road traffic collisions are directly attributable to vehicle defects and research in the EU and America has indicated that a vehicle testing system can reduce road traffic collisions by between 5 and 17%.

MOT Tests

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what steps the Department is taking to promote the law concerning the MOT test and vehicle tax.
(AQW 1733/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Driver & Vehicle Agency DVA have taken a number of actions to improve the level of compliance with vehicle testing in Northern Ireland. These have included the issuing of vehicle test reminders to vehicle owners shortly before a test is due, the publication of an information leaflet on vehicle testing and its impact on road safety, and, most recently, the introduction of the mandatory display of vehicle test certificates, with an associated publicity campaign.

In addition, if a vehicle requires a vehicle test certificate, that certificate must be checked before the vehicle can be licensed.

The collection of vehicle excise duty is pursued robustly by DVA. The registered keepers of vehicles are sent a reminder about 3 weeks before their tax disc is due to expire and keepers who fail to either renew their licence or make a statutory off road notification receive a penalty notice. In addition, the Agency runs television, radio and poster advertising campaigns regularly warning motorists of the consequences of using unlicensed vehicles.

MOT Tests

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what advice his Department provides to motorcycle

owners whose MOT certificates have expired but who need to ride their motorcycles to utilise the services of a mechanic.
(AQW 1734/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The advice the Department's Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) gives to a motorcycle owner in these circumstances is that a motorcycle without a valid MOT certificate cannot be legally driven on a public road, except when bringing the motorcycle to or from a test centre for a previously booked appointment or to or from a place where the vehicle is being repaired after the refusal of an MOT certificate.

Sewerage Systems

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail action taken against construction companies who have not completed sewerage systems at building sites to the required standard in the last 5 years.
(AQW 1742/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Completion of sewerage systems to a required standard is not a matter for my Department as it falls under Northern Ireland Water's legislation, specifically, the Water and Sewerage Service (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. It is therefore the developer's responsibility to work in conjunction with Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to ensure that required sewerage system standards are met. For that reason no enforcement action has been taken by my Department against construction companies in the last 5 years regarding this matter.

Noise Pollution

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his Department's procedures for bringing forward a prosecution for noise pollution.
(AQW 1759/09)

The Minister of the Environment: For noise pollution from domestic and commercial premises, enforcement action is taken by District Councils who have powers to deal with noise nuisance under The Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 or the Noise Act 1996.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency regulates noise from industrial premises to which it has issued operating permits under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Planning Applications

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment to detail, in each of the last five years, the number

of (i) planning applications passed by councils for Management Board Referrals; (ii) the number of these rejected by the Management Board on the grounds that they were deemed to be small scale developments; and (iii) applications whose planning recommendation has been reversed.[R] (AQW 1775/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department has provided the following statistics detailing in each of the last five years the numbers of (i) planning applications passed by councils for Management Board Referrals and (ii) the number of applications whose planning recommendation has been reversed. Figures are not available regarding the number of applications rejected by the Management Board on the grounds that they were deemed to be small scale. However, figures are available for applications not accepted as Management Board Referrals and are listed below.

Year	No. of Applications passed by councils for MBR's	No. of Applications whose recommendation been reversed
2007/2008	44	0
2006/2007	58	2
2005/2006	173	5
2004/2005	209	3
2003/2004	58	7

Year	No. of Applications not accepted as MBR's	% of Applications not accepted as MBR's
2007/2008	36	82%
2006/2007	54	93%
2005/2006	156	90%
2004/2005	133	64%
2003/2004	14	24%

These figures have been extracted from a live dataset which is continuously updated and validated. They should therefore be regarded as indicative only at this point in time and should not be compared with any previous figures published by the Agency.

Zebra Mussels

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the situation relating to the prevalence of Zebra mussels in Lough Neagh. (AQW 1779/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Following the discovery of Zebra mussels in Lough Neagh in November 2005, Queen's University Belfast have been

studying the distribution of Zebra mussels in Lough Neagh and are reporting to the Zebra Mussel Control Group which is chaired by NIEA.

To date adult Zebra mussels have been observed on the hulls of boats removed from the water at various points around Lough Neagh. Rope spat surveys carried out around the Lough have shown that Zebra mussel veligers (larva) are widely distributed which would tend to indicate an established population of Zebra mussels in Lough Neagh.

No colonies of adult Zebra mussels have yet been observed on hard rock substrate, as was seen at Lower and Upper Lough Erne during the early phase of colonisation there.

Borough Status of Councils

Dr Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to report on the future of the borough status of existing councils after reorganisation following the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 1784/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have previously answered this question and would refer you to my reply to Assembly Question Number AQW 1376/09.

PPS 5

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of the Environment when he expects PPS 5 to be published; and if he intends to publish it as a consultation document. (AQW 1804/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Draft PPS5 (revised) is currently the subject of legal proceedings with leave granted to Central Craigavon Limited by the Courts in April 2008 for a judicial review of the transfer of the Draft PPS from DRD to DOE. This litigation is ongoing and a hearing is scheduled for 25th November 2008.

While the judicial review is likely to cause some delay in publication I am keen to progress to the issue of the final PPS at the earliest opportunity. With this in mind my officials are continuing to take forward work on PPS5 where it is possible to do so.

Retail Impact of Food Stores

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of the Environment what assessment he has made of the retail impact of food stores that have received planning approval from his Department; and if this impact on retail has undergone any changes over the last 3 years. (AQW 1808/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The retail impact of a food store proposal on the vitality or viability of a town centre is a material consideration for Planning Service under the Department's current policy for town centres and retail developments. That policy is contained in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5): Retailing and Town Centres and draft PPS5: Retailing, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure Developments.

In accordance with PPS5, my planning officials may request that a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) be submitted in support of any planning application for a food store. However, in the majority of cases, a RIA will only be requested where a major food store is proposed in an out of town centre location. A major food store involves the provision of over 1,000 square metres of gross retail floorspace.

The RIA provides planners with the information they require to assess whether or not a proposal is likely to have a detrimental impact on the retailing function of a town centre. The analysis of the RIA, as undertaken by planners, forms an integral part of the planning process.

There have been no changes during the last 3 years to the way that the retail impact of a food store is assessed.

Monitoring Farms

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment to confirm (i) if his Department has been monitoring farms in the Strangford constituency in the past month by helicopter and/or plane; and (ii) whether he intends to monitor every farm by this method. (AQW 1819/09)

The Minister of the Environment:

- (i) NIEA was monitoring Areas of Special Scientific Interest by helicopter in Co Down during the week commencing 13th October 2008. Several farmland sites around Saintfield and Crossgar within in the Strangford Constituency were included in this exercise.
- (ii) Helicopter monitoring of ASSIs, first tried in 1998, is an efficient and cost effective way of checking ASSIs for damage. Most ASSIs are now monitored by this method annually. NIEA only monitors those farms designated as ASSIs by helicopter.
- (iii) I am unaware of recent aerial monitoring of farms in the Strangford Constituency by any other government Department or Agency.

Killing of the Red Kite

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if his Department (i) has been involved in the investigation into the killing of the Red Kite in South Down; and (ii) has it had contact with the Gameskeepers Association to ascertain the facts in this matter. (AQW 1822/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Offences committed under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 are criminal offences and relevant investigations are the responsibility of the PSNI.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) works closely with the PSNI Wildlife Liaison Officer in advising on wildlife crime and has been in close contact in relation to this case.

As the investigations are being progressed by the PSNI, NIEA has not made any contact with the Gamekeepers Association in relation to this matter.

MOT Tests

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment how many cars underwent MOT tests at the Newtownards Test Centre, in each of the last five years. (AQW 1863/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Detail of the number of MOT car tests carried out in each of the last five years at the Newtownards test centre is included in the following table.

Financial year	Number of car tests conducted
2003/04	49,022
2004/05	47,621
2005/06	54,487
2006/07	64,566
2007/08	63,248

Driving Tests

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment how many driving tests took place at the Newtownards Test Centre, in each of the last five years. (AQW 1864/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Newtownards Test Centre conducts practical driving tests for private cars and motorcycles. Details of the number of car and motorcycle practical driving tests carried in each of the last five years at the Newtownards test centre is included in the following table.

Financial year	Number of tests conducted
2003/04	3419
2004/05	3140
2005/06	4839
2006/07	4983
2007/08	5891

Planning Refusals

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment pursuant to his answer to AQW 345/09, to provide a further breakdown detailing how many of the (i) 34 planning refusals in Londonderry/ Derry in 2006/7, were in the BT47 and BT48 areas; and (ii) how many in 2007/8 to date were in the BT47 and BT48 areas. (AQW 1875/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department has provided the following statistics detailing how many commercial planning applications of the (i) 34 planning refusals in the Londonderry Division in 2006/7 were in the BT47 and BT48 areas; and (ii) how many in the 2007/8 were in the BT47 and BT48 areas.

Londonderry Division	Year 06/07	Year 07/08
Refusals in BT47 and BT48	17	20

Applications received in any year may not be determined in the same year. Therefore direct comparisons between 06/07 and 07/08 figures should not be made.

These figures have been extracted from a live database which is continuously updated and validated. They should therefore be regarded as indicative only at this point in time and should not be compared with any previous figures published by the Agency.

Cost of Fly-Tipping

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what the cost of fly-tipping has been, in each council area, in each of the last three years. (AQW 1876/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency does not hold this information, as the responsibility for fly-tipping rests primarily with District Councils.

Ards and Down Area Plan

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 will be (i) finalised; and (ii) released to the public. (AQW 1878/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department is committed to finalising a new Plan for Ards and Down by the end of March 2009, in line with our Business Plan Objective and the final Plan will be released to the public at the time of adoption.

Ards and Down Area Plan

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if the implementation of the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 will be delayed due to the requirement for PPS 14 legislation to be passed through the Assembly. (AQW 1879/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department is committed to finalising a new Plan for Ards and Down by the end of March 2009, in line with our Business Plan Objective. It is not envisaged that the implementation of the Plan will be delayed due to the requirement for PPS 14 to be passed through the Assembly.

Land Available for Housing

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total acreage of land available for housing, broken down by district council area, and how much of the land available for housing lies within 100 year flood plains. (AQW 1884/09)

The Minister of the Environment: In accordance with the plan, monitor and manage ethos of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and PPS 12 Housing in Settlements, housing developments and the residual land availability in settlements are monitored annually by Planning Service. Land available for housing includes zoned land and other land for which planning permission has been granted.

The results of the most up to date annual housing monitor survey are set out in the Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Summary Report 2007 available from the Planning Service website at www.planningni.gov.uk. The amount of land available for housing across the 26 District Councils of Northern Ireland is 5,321 hectares (13,149 acres). The District Council breakdown is laid out in Annex 1 attached.

The Department is unable to provide information in relation to how much of the housing land available is within areas commonly referred to as 100 year flood plains. This is because the 100 year flood plain maps, while indicative of where land may flood, are not definitive and do not comprehensively cover the whole of Northern Ireland. This would make the task of trying to accurately calculate the area of housing land that lies within such flood plains impracticable and

of limited value. Even if possible any such exercise would constitute a disproportionate use of resources.

PPS15 Planning & Flood Risk lays down a precautionary approach to decision making when addressing flood risks in the preparation of development plans and the determination of planning applications. It states that development plans will not bring forward sites or zone land that may be susceptible to flooding, now or in the future, unless the most exceptional circumstances exist. Furthermore, it provides a set of land use policies to deal with the potential for flood risk where new development is proposed and places a requirement on developers to accompany planning applications with flood risk assessments in certain circumstances. Planning Service has worked closely with DARD Rivers Agency and other consultees in the preparation of development plans and the determination of planning applications and will continue to do so.

My colleague Michelle Gildernew, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, launched the 'Strategic Flood Map (NI) Rivers and Sea' on 4th November 2008. While this will make a significant improvement and provide strategic information in relation to flooding, nevertheless, it will still be indicative of where land may flood and will not provide definitive local flood risk information. Detailed local studies would be required to determine, more accurately, the areas of land that lie within the flood plains.

Pollution Offences

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 1374/09, to name the five companies that have committed repeat pollution offences; and to detail the nature of these offences.
(AQW 1928/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Some of the companies that have committed repeat pollution offences are being considered for prosecution and disclosing their identity at this stage may compromise the Department's position in such cases. The Department is taking legal advice on your request and once this legal advice has been considered, officials will write to you to advise you of the outcome.

Pollution Offences

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 1383/09, to provide further details of the cases that resulted in the courts imposing one prison sentence and one suspended prison

sentence on offenders for river pollution offences.
(AQW 1929/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Both of these cases were for joint waste and water pollution offences. The case that resulted in the courts imposing a prison sentence involved an illegal landfill site which caused leachate to enter the Dunore River. The offender, Mr Samuel Wilson McLroy, was found guilty of three offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and one offence under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 in Craigavon Crown Court on 4 December 2006 and was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 months.

The case that resulted in the courts imposing a suspended prison sentence also involved an illegal landfill site which caused leachate to enter the Drumragh River. The offender, Mr William Jordan, was found guilty of six offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and two offences under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 in Omagh Crown Court on 14 March 2007 and was sentenced to 8 months imprisonment, suspended for two years.

Glenfarm Holdings Rendering Plant

Mr Butler asked the Minister of the Environment how many complaints against Glenfarm Holdings Rendering Plant, Glenavy, his Department has received in the last 6 months in relation to (i) pollution of local rivers; and (ii) odours emanating from the plant.
(AQW 1944/09)

The Minister of the Environment: (i) The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has investigated 6 specific complaints of water pollution relating to the Ulster Farm By-Products site in the last 6 months. The dates are as follows:

- 16 June 2008;
- 29 June 2008;
- 5 September 2008;
- 12 September 2008;
- 16 September 2008; and
- 17 September 2008.

(ii) NIEA has received 152 complaints, relating to odour in the area around Ulster Farm By-Products in the last 6 months. The monthly breakdown is tabulated below.

Month	Number of Odour Complaints
April 08	22
May 08	24
June 08	29

Month	Number of Odour Complaints
July 08	28
August 08	25
September 08	24

Rose Energy Planning Application

Mr Butler asked the Minister of the Environment how many letters his Department has received in support of the Rose Energy planning application for Glenavy. (AQW 1947/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Planning Service has received 3661 letters in support of the Rose Energy planning application.

MOT Tests

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the latest average waiting times for an MOT test at each testing centre. (AQW 1949/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Details of the weekly and year to date average waiting times for a vehicle test in the 15 test centres is included in the following table.

AVERAGE WAITING TIME FOR A VEHICLE TEST IN DAYS

	Weekly	Year to date
Test Centre	19 – 25 October 2008	1 April – 25 October 2008
Armagh	9	12
Ballymena	8	18
Belfast	10	15
Coleraine	8	16
Cookstown	8	18
Craigavon	9	13
Downpatrick	8	15
Enniskillen	12	17
Larne	8	16
Lisburn	9	15
Londonderry	11	21
Mallusk	7	14
Newry	12	19
Newtownards	7	18
Omagh	11	16

Road Traffic Accidents

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to address the rising number of motorcyclists killed in road traffic accidents. (AQW 1977/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The level of motorcyclist deaths and injuries in recent years has to be seen in the context of the increase in motorcycle use. Motorcycle registrations have increased from less than 10,000 in 1991, when there were 17 deaths, to almost 32,000 in 2007, when there were 25 deaths. Taking those two years as illustrative of the pattern, the fatality rate, relative to the number of bikes on the road, halved in that period.

However, the figures are still appalling, and there are a number of measures designed to improve road safety in this key area either already in place or on the way.

At present, my Department trains and assesses motorcycle instructors and maintains a voluntary register of those who are available to provide training commercially for new motorcyclists. The voluntary scheme is based on the mandatory compulsory basic training scheme in Great Britain but in addition Northern Ireland instructors, of whom there are currently over 70 on the register, are trained to take new motorcyclists to driving test standard and above. Surveys indicate that most new motorcyclists are trained by instructors who are on the voluntary register. To remain on the register, each instructor must be reassessed every four years and continue to meet the standard required.

On 8 December 2008 the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) will be introducing a new off-road motorcycle manoeuvres test. The new test is intended to ensure that motorcycle test candidates are competent in the control of their machines at a more demanding level than is currently the case. The aim of the test is to improve the standard of road safety for motorcycle and moped riders and ultimately all road users.

Following a public consultation the Agency is introducing compulsory basic training (CBT) for learner motorcycle riders and an approved motorcycle instructor (AMI) register.

The CBT scheme will introduce a mandatory requirement for all learner motorcycle riders to undertake a basic level of training before being permitted to ride on the public road. When a similar scheme was introduced in GB a fall was recorded in road traffic collisions involving motorcycle riders.

The mandatory AMI register will mean that only instructors who have passed the DVA assessment will be legally entitled to conduct and assess CBT and carry out all pre and post licence training for motorcyclists.

The current DOE advertising campaign for motorcyclists was launched in May 2003, and is aired three times throughout the year: at the start of the biking season in March and again in the months of May and August. The last research on this campaign, which was carried out in May 2008, showed that it was still achieving high levels of awareness and impact.

Slurry Spreading

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what advice he received from (i) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development officials; and (ii) his officials, before he extended the period for slurry spreading to the end of the year. (AQO 900/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department of the Environment has joint responsibility with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) on implementation of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2006. I received advice from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) which is responsible for inspection and enforcement under this legislation. Whilst this was primarily an operational matter for NIEA, they did liaise directly and agreed with DARD the approach taken.

On 2 October 2008, I clarified in a news release that the Regulations contained a transitional arrangement allowing farmers, with insufficient storage, to apply livestock manures up to 31 December 2008. However I also made it clear that from 1 January 2009 under the Regulations, all farmers must have in place sufficient storage capacity and observe the closed period. Farmers must also comply with all other measures including those relating to adverse weather conditions.

Refundable Deposit Scheme for Glass Bottles

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration he has given to the introduction of a refundable deposit scheme for glass bottles, particularly beer bottles. (AQO 825/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have not given any consideration to the introduction of a refundable deposit scheme for glass bottles in Northern Ireland. However, I understand that a feasibility study, organised by DEFRA, on bottle deposit charges is taking place in England and that the Scottish Government recently consulted on a possible return to the era of returnable lemonade bottles. I expect to receive details on the findings of these exercises in the near future. There may be some merit in considering a refundable deposit system for Northern Ireland, however, I would prefer to await the

findings in England and Scotland before making any commitments in relation to this matter.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of the Environment to provide a costing plan for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency for (i) 2008-09; (ii) 2009-10; and (iii) 2010-11. (AQO 880/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The budget allocated to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is set at £54.2m in 2008/09, £53.6m in 2009/10 and £52.6m 2010/11.

This funding will enable (NIEA) to meet its overall aim of protecting, conserving and promoting the national and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

NIEA is currently implementing a one year business plan which describes how it is spending its budget in 2008/09. This plan, which is available to the public and can be viewed on the NIEA website, sets out its aims, objectives and key targets, including those set by the Executive under the Programme for Government.

Work is now starting on a three year corporate and business plan for the period 2009-2012.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the statutory timetable for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and other consultees to respond to planning application consultations. (AQO 903/09)

The Minister of the Environment: At present there is no statutory requirement for any consultee to respond to a consultation on a planning application within a specified timeframe. However, Service Level Agreements are in place with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and other consultees. The target for the response to consultation requests in the Service Level Agreement is 75% within 30 working days.

Review of Public Administration

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment when he will remove his potential conflict of interest in leading the Review of Public Administration while being a council member. (AQO 837/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I would like first of all to point out that the major decisions on

the reform of local government were taken by the Executive before I was appointed as Minister for the Environment. I have already declared publicly my intention to resign as a councillor and that I will determine the timing of my resignation in consultation with party colleagues.

In the meantime, I have also confirmed publicly that I will not accept any severance payment which may be put in place for retiring councillors as a result of the Review of Public Administration. There will therefore be no question of any personal conflict of interest on my part in dealing with any proposals on severance arrangements.

Revised Planning Policy Statement 14

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the revised Planning Policy Statement 14. (AQO 877/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I hope the Executive will consider the Revised draft PPS 14 at the earliest opportunity. If there is no agreement, I will shelve the revised draft and we will live with the existing policies.

This would mean residential development in rural areas continuing to be hampered by restrictive planning policy, and planning policy on farm diversification continuing to lag behind rural development policies.

Policies in the revised draft could benefit rural communities without harming the environment.

Rights of Non-Farming Rural Dwellers

Mrs O'Neill asked the Minister of the Environment if he will protect the rights of non-farming rural dwellers to build homes in their rural community. (AQO 912/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I hope the Executive will consider the Revised draft PPS 14 at the earliest opportunity. If there is no agreement, I will shelve the revised draft and we will live with the existing policies.

This would mean residential development in rural areas continuing to be hampered by restrictive planning policy, and planning policy on farm diversification continuing to lag behind rural development policies.

Policies in the revised draft could benefit rural communities without harming the environment.

Ards and Down Area Plan

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Ards and Down Area Plan. (AQO 914/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department received the Planning Appeals Commission's report on the public inquiry, requested by Planning Service to hear objections into the draft Ards and Down Plan, at the end of March 2008, later than was originally anticipated.

The report has raised a number of complex issues, which are linked to broader regional policy considerations and also contains a number of recommendations on the adoption process. The specific content of the PAC report is confidential and can only be made available at adoption so I am unable to elaborate on these issues or recommendations at present.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to finalise our consideration of the PAC report as early as originally programmed, due to the complexity of the issues involved. That said I can assure you that considerable progress has been made towards the adoption of the final plan and a Paper outlining the main issues and the way forward has been approved by the Management Board.

The Department is confident that a final Plan for Ards and Down will be published by the end of March 2009, in line with our Business Plan Objective.

Review of Public Administration

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the potential conflict of interest that could arise as a result of his responsibility for the reform of local government and his position as a councillor. (AQO 841/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I would like first of all to point out that the major decisions on the reform of local government were taken by the Executive before I was appointed as Minister for the Environment. I have already declared publicly my intention to resign as a councillor and that I will determine the timing of my resignation in consultation with party colleagues.

In the meantime, I have also confirmed publicly that I will not accept any severance payment which may be put in place for retiring councillors as a result of the Review of Public Administration. There will therefore be no question of any personal conflict of interest on my part in dealing with any proposals on severance arrangements.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment when the Northern Ireland Environment Agency will report on the cause of the wall collapse at Antrim Castle. (AQO 911/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The wall of the Castle is scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. Under that Order, it is the responsibility of the owner, in this case Antrim Borough Council, to commission any report on the cause of the collapse. It is also their responsibility to undertake any remedial works.

Planning Service

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment how many representations he has made to the Planning Service since he was appointed Minister of the Environment; and what advice he has received from Departmental officials in relation to potential conflicts of interest. (AQO 910/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Since I was appointed as Minister of the Environment I have made 71 representations to the Planning Service.

I am fully entitled to make representations about planning applications, provided there is no potential for conflict of interest. Such representations are treated in the same way as those from any other elected representative. A conflict of interest would only arise where I am involved in the final decision making process on an application and any such conflict will be avoided.

Local Government Employee Retirement Age

Lord Browne asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to remove the default age of retirement at 65 for local government employees. (AQO 867/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Section 44 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 which set the default age of retirement for local government employees at 65 was repealed by The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (SR 2006 No. 261) which came into operation on 1 October 2006.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in relation to the

appointment of a Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. (AQO 823/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The necessary papers defining the job specification and setting out experience and skills required of a successful applicant are in the process of completion. Public advertisement of the post will follow soon.

Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment if the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner can make significant change to local government boundaries during his review. (AQO 862/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner has been tasked with making recommendations on the boundaries of the eleven new local government districts and the wards that constitute those districts.

The very nature of his task in reducing from 26 the number of districts means that the existing boundaries will be changed significantly.

The Local Government (Boundaries) Act 2008 specifies, as the starting point for the Commissioner's review, the broad boundaries of the new districts by reference to the current local government districts.

The new districts must incorporate the whole or "major part" of the current districts, as set out in the Boundaries Act. The implication is that a minor part – which to my mind could still be a significant part – could, if necessary, be included in a different district from that envisaged by the Act.

It is for the Commissioner to decide what changes are appropriate - significant or otherwise - to the current district and ward boundaries, in line with the rules set in Schedule 4 to the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, as amended.

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Office Headquarters and Dependent Offices

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time staff, that are employed or proposed to be employed in the office headquarters and dependent offices of (a) the Charities Commission; (b) the Victims and Survivors Commission; (c) the

Regional Health and Social Care Board; (d) the Common Services Organisation; (e) Northern Ireland Civil Service Shared Services; (f) Local Government Shared Services; (g) the Education and Skills Authority; (h) the Northern Ireland Library Board; (i) Land and Property Services; (j) the Northern Ireland Environment Agency; (k) Northern Ireland Water; and (l) the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. (AQW 1251/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): Details of the number of staff employed or proposed to be employed in the specified office headquarters and dependent offices are set out in the attached table.

	Currently Employed		Proposed to be Employed	
	(i) Full-time	(ii) Part-time	(i) Full-time	(ii) Part-time
(a) Charities Commission	-	-	16	-
(b) Victims and Survivors Commission	7	-	(1)	(1)
(c) Regional Health and Social Care Board	-	-	Less than 400 (2)	-
(d) Regional Support Services Organisation ⁽³⁾	-	-	Less than 950 (2)	-
(e) Northern Ireland Civil Service Shared Services	-	-	(1)	(1)
(f) Local Government Shared Services	-	-	(1)	(1)
(g) Education and Skills Authority	-	-	(1)	(1)
(h) Northern Ireland Library Board	-	-	35 ⁽²⁾	-
(i) Land and Property Services	768	103	-	-
(j) Northern Ireland Environment Agency	-	-	807	26
(k) Northern Ireland Water	1,720 ⁽⁴⁾	-	-	-

	Currently Employed		Proposed to be Employed	
	(i) Full-time	(ii) Part-time	(i) Full-time	(ii) Part-time
(l) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	2,761	377	-	-

(1) Information not available.

(2) Estimated figure and it has not possible to provide a breakdown of full-time/part-time posts.

(3) Previously referred to as the Common Services Organisation.

(4) It has not been possible to provide a breakdown of full-time/part-time posts.

Departmental Private Office

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff are employed in his Departmental private office; and the annual cost of employing these staff. (AQW 1341/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are seven (7) staff in DFP Private Office. The annual costs of employing the staff during the financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09 to date (1 April to 30 September) are:

2007/08	£149,127.60
2008/09 to date	£69,701.70

These figures exclude the Minister's Special Adviser.

Government Funded Agencies

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many (i) civil servants; and (ii) senior staff, employed by government funded agencies, are paid more than the post for First Minister. (AQW 1460/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are 4 civil servants who are paid more than the post for First Minister.

There are no senior staff in government funded agencies who are paid more than the post of First Minister. This answer excludes public bodies as they are not agencies of the Northern Ireland Departments.

Departmental Assets

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has plans to raise revenue by selling Departmental assets. (AQW 1537/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As set out in the Budget 2008-2011 document, Northern Ireland departments have plans in place to generate £486 million of capital receipts in the current financial year with a further £60 million coming from the work of the Capital Realisation Taskforce (CRT).

Primary responsibility for any decisions regarding the sale of assets lies with individual departments. As regards my own department, I have currently no plans to raise further revenue from the sale of assets in 2008-09, beyond those set out in the Budget document.

Construction Industry

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the current economic pressures on the construction industry. (AQW 1619/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Government recognises and shares the concerns of the construction industry, particularly in relation to the downturn in the housing sector. I have recently met with a wide range of representatives of the industry to discuss their concerns and ideas at first hand. The First and deputy First Ministers and the Committee for Finance and Personnel have also held similar meetings.

The Programme for Government and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) will result in up to £20bn being invested by 2018. This is a key instrument and opportunity to mitigate the effects of the economic downturn particularly within the construction industry.

Government is fully committed to the delivery of ISNI. The Strategic Investment Board Ltd, with input from the Central Procurement Directorate in my Department, are introducing a new Delivery Tracking System to facilitate up-to-date monitoring of Departments' progress in delivering major projects and programmes.

Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on proposals for a Small Business Rates Relief Scheme. (AQW 1625/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As you know, the Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland (ERINI), was commissioned to carry out a study into the case for a small business rate relief scheme, in 2007. Its report, published in March 2008, concluded that there was not a strong economic case for the introduction of such a scheme. It added, however, that if it were decided to introduce a rate relief scheme for small businesses, a targeted one based on wider social grounds would be worth examining.

You will also be aware that the DFP Committee, while accepting the main recommendation of the report that a broad scheme could not be justified, put forward several options for a more targeted scheme.

My officials have carried out a further assessment of the likely impact and effectiveness of these alternative options. I am currently considering their recommendations and the further evidence presented and hope to make an announcement on a way forward very shortly.

Gross Value Added Figures

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what the most recent Gross Value Added (GVA) figures are and; how this compares with other UK regions. (AQW 1629/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The latest Gross Value Added (GVA) figures available (2006)¹ show that Northern Ireland's GVA stands at £26.43 billion, which equates to £15,175 per capita. This per capita figure is equivalent to 81.5% of the UK average and places Northern Ireland joint second bottom (with the North East) of the 12 UK regions, and marginally above Wales (77%).

Gross Value Added Gap

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what the pre-devolution target was for closing the Gross Value Added (GVA) gap. (AQW 1630/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The previous Direct Rule Government did not have a specific target for closing the GVA per capita gap between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

However, the previous draft Regional Economic Strategy (reflecting the limited aspirations of the Direct Rule Government) included analysis which predicted that GVA per head in Northern Ireland, relative to the UK average, would increase from 80 percent in 2002 to 80.5 percent in 2015.

Land and Property Services

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the average time for new properties to be placed on the rateable list, by Land and Property Services. (AQW 1654/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The average time for new properties to be placed in the Valuation List by Land and Properties Services since 1st April 2006 was 126 days.

For domestic properties only, it was 129 days on average while for non-domestic properties only it was 97 days.

There is no appreciable loss of revenue by any delayed valuations within the life of a Valuation List as, the date of valuation does not restrict the commencement date for billing purposes.

Budget Stocktake Exercise

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the potential of the current Budget Stocktake exercise to reallocate spending, beyond the scope of the current quarterly monitoring rounds. (AQW 1660/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The normal quarterly monitoring round process provides the opportunity for the Executive to reallocate resources within each financial year.

In March 2008 the Executive agreed to conduct a Strategic Stocktake rather than engage in a full Budget exercise.

As I informed the Assembly on 14 October 2008, the objective of the Strategic Stocktake is to review progress to date and allow departments register any significant pressures or easements that they are aware of for 2009-10 and 2010-11. The focus is on surveying the landscape at this early stage, rather than waiting until we are already into the next financial year.

In this way, we can determine our strategic approach now to managing any pressures through the in-year monitoring processes, although the key principle remains that it is only possible for the Executive to make additional allocations through a corresponding reduction in the funding for other business areas.

Civil Service and Water Charges

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the proposals he discussed with the Chief Secretary of the Treasury, in the week ending 11 October 2008, about (i) the Civil Service equal pay claim: and (ii) the deferral of water charges. (AQW 1677/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: I met with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 8 October to discuss how both the burden of the one-off cost associated with the Civil Service equal-pay claim and the issues linked to the financing of the introduction of water charges could be handled with the least possible impact on the delivery of local public services. A range of proposals were discussed,

including gaining early access to end year flexibility and the use of capital to help address the Equal Pay issue, but as discussions are still ongoing it would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Sale of Surplus Assets

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel further to his statement to the Assembly on the June monitoring round, to detail the figure for capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets, particularly house sales. (AQW 1678/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The generation of additional revenue from the sale of surplus assets is not separately identified from other capital receipts in the monitoring of expenditure by Northern Ireland departments.

The September monitoring return from the Department for Social Development projected a £67.4 million shortfall in terms of land and house sales. However, pro-active management action by the department has resulted in the net pressure being reduced to £51.9 million.

Strategic Stocktake

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what issues are being considered as part of the 'strategic stocktake' the Executive is due to undertake in relation to the Budget and Programme for Government. (AQW 1679/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Strategic Stocktake of the Executive's expenditure plans for 2009-10 and 2010-11 will involve a review of progress against plans and any increases or decreases in requirements. The key issues that will be considered as part of the exercise include the approach to the NICS Equal Pay Claim, the future funding arrangements for water and sewerage services and the impact of the downturn in the property market on planned capital receipts.

It is also expected that departments will raise a number of additional issues in their submissions to DFP.

Budgetary Receipts

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give the overall percentage change in budgetary receipts as an outcome of the fall in property prices. (AQW 1680/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The difference between the actual level of capital receipts generated by departments and those planned in the

Budget process is the result of a range of factors. Although the fall in property prices is important, the more constrained position in terms of the credit market has also had a significant impact. In addition, departments would be expected to take remedial action to offset any shortfall in planned capital receipts.

Therefore, it is not possible to provide a figure for the percentage change in budgetary receipts as an outcome of the fall in property prices with an acceptable degree of accuracy.

Strategic Stocktake

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) for his assessment of the ability of a 'strategic stocktake' to deal with large shifts and displacements in the Budget; and (ii) what consideration he has given to bringing his proposed adjustments to the Assembly. (AQW 1682/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The strategic stocktake exercise provides the opportunity for the Executive to consider the emerging pressures and easements identified by departments since the Executive's spending plans for 2009-10 and 2010-11 were approved by the Assembly in January 2008. The purpose of the exercise will be to inform decisions by the Executive regarding how best to deal with issues arising.

As I explained to the Assembly on 14 October, the focus is on surveying the landscape at this early stage and in determining our strategic approach to managing any pressures through the in-year monitoring processes. It is at that point that the Assembly would be notified of any adjustments.

Rates Arrears

Mr Kennedy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps the Minister has taken to rectify rates arrears, with over £130 million outstanding. (AQW 1683/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Land and Property Services resolutely and consistently pursues all ratepayers who have not discharged their rate liability, with some 80 staff working on a full-time basis on the various stages of rate recovery.

The first stage in the rate recovery cycle is to issue final notices for those ratepayers who fail to discharge their debt or to make a mutually agreeable repayment plan after having received a final notice. The next stage is to instigate court proceedings. Should the debt still remain unpaid following the award of a decree in the Magistrates Court, then further legal action is taken, which results in the case being referred to

the Enforcement of Judgements Office (who will attempt to secure payment through, for example, an attachment of earnings order or an order charging land). Alternatively, the debt could be referred to the Crown Solicitors Office to instigate bankruptcy or liquidation proceedings.

So far during 2008/2009, Land and Property Services has issued 97,669 final payment notices and 26,769 court proceedings. The Magistrates Courts have awarded 6,514 decrees for rating debt.

Since 31 March 2008 the successful implementation of our arrears strategy has reduced the level of debt owing (£123.8m) to around £70m.

Devolution of Policing and Justice

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on discussions with the UK Treasury on the financial settlement for the devolution of policing and justice, including: (i) the determination of new baselines for the Northern Ireland Block Grant and; (ii) the revision of the Barnett Formula. (AQW 1689/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are no discussions with the Treasury on a financial settlement for the devolution of policing and justice since political agreement has not been reached on this issue. It is clear that funding issues will play a key part in any future discussions.

Rates Collection

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the basis of the 15% rise in the cost of rates collection charged to District Councils, considering the shortfall in funding for the agency during the current Budgetary cycle.[R] (AQW 1708/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Agency estimates the cost of rates collection will increase by 15% by 2009/10 compared with 2007/08 to meet additional costs of implementing new rating reforms e.g. extra staff, continued investment to develop IT systems.

Introduction of £400 Cap

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the timescale for a decision on the introduction of a £400k cap in [the timetable for the setting of] the district rate to be struck by Councils for 2009/10.[R] (AQW 1711/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Consultation was undertaken earlier this year on a

proposal to reduce the maximum capital value. This included details on the results of the initial integrated impact assessment that had been carried out in relation to this change. Having taken account of the responses to this consultation and the analysis, I intend to reduce the maximum capital value to £400,000 from April 2009. This has been announced well in advance of councils striking their rates, for 2009/10, by 15 February 2009.

Introduction of £400 Cap

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on contingencies that may be put in place to assist Councils if a decision to introduce a £400k cap for the 2009/10 financial year is made after Councils strike their district rate.[R] (AQW 1713/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: No contingencies are needed given that I have already announced my decision to reduce the maximum capital value to £400,000 from April 2009. This is well in advance of when district councils strike their rate for 2009/10, subject to Executive sign off on the Rates (Amendment) Bill. I will also be asking the Assembly to approve legislation that will allow compensating payments to be made to district councils in 2009/10 and 2010/11 for any loss in district rate revenue sustained as a result of reducing the cap from £500,000 to £400,000. This will be set at 100% in 2009/10 and 50% in 2010/11.

Introduction of £400 Cap

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of a £400k cap in the estimated Penny Product figures for the 2009/10 financial year that are being provided to Councils.[R] (AQW 1714/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Estimated Penny Product (EPP) provided to District Councils for the 2009-2010 year will not take account of the reduction in the cap from £500,000 to £400,000. The approach being taken in the EPP is that there will be no loss in revenue to Councils with the cap reduced to £400K. Councils will therefore strike their rate without any adjustment for the revised cap. It is intended that this will be paid in-year, by the Department of Finance and Personnel, on this basis.

At finalisation stage the reduction in cap from £500,000 to £400,000 will be considered a loss in income revenue to District Councils. The compensating payments to councils would be paid along side this.

Subject to Executive sign off on the Rates (Amendment) Bill, I will be asking the Assembly

to approve legislation that will allow compensating payments to be provided to District Councils for the years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. This will consist of 100% relief in 2009-2010 and 50% in the following year.

Investment Strategy

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the roll-out of the Investment Strategy over the next 3 years. (AQW 1793/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The latest forecasts provided by Departments indicate that gross spend in taking forward the Investment Strategy will exceed £1.6 billion in 2008-09.

In relation to 2009-10 and 2010-11, the current Strategic Stocktake exercise provides the opportunity for the Executive to consider a strategic approach to any emerging pressures and easements identified by Departments for those years.

Cost of Flights

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of return flights taken by civil servants from (a) Belfast International Airport; and (b) George Best Belfast City Airport; and (ii) the total costs of these flights, in each of the last five years. (AQW 1810/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The information requested is provided in the attached table.

The information provided covers the full years from 2004 to 2007 and part information for 2008. The Northern Ireland Civil Service Travel Management Company, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, has provided this information. However, any flights booked outside of the Travel Management contract are not included.

NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE

2008 Jan - Sep	Total Costs (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast City Apt	£883,436	4,911
Belfast International Apt	£181,143	1,524
2007 Jan - Dec	Total Cost (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast City Apt	£1,218,030	6,831
Belfast International Apt	£240,519	2,225
2006 Jan - Dec	Total Costs (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast City Apt	£1,324,908	7,132

2008 Jan - Sep	Total Costs (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast International Apt	£176,355	1,672
2005 Jan - Dec	Total Costs (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast City Apt	£1,615,509	8,053
Belfast International Apt	£108,961	927
2004 Oct - Dec	Total Costs (excl. Tax)	No of Flights
Belfast City Apt	£406,787	2,035
Belfast International Apt	£5,332	77

Cost of Flights

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of flights taken by civil servants; (ii) the total costs; and (iii) the average cost of a flight between (a) Belfast International Airport; and (b) George Best Belfast City Airport and all London airports. (AQW 1811/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The information requested is provided in the attached table.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Travel Management Company, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, has provided this information. However, any flights booked outside of the Travel Management contract are not included. Information covering five years is not available. I have therefore provided information held from 2004 to 2008 to date.

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2008 Jan - Sep			
Belfast To London	4,128	617,885	150
(a) Belfast International	717	34,968	49
London Gatwick	296	14,442	49
London Heathrow	217	12,636	58
London Luton	103	3,851	37
London Stanstead	101	4,039	40
(b) Belfast City	3,411	582,918	171
London City	27	4,370	162
London Gatwick	634	56,335	89
London Heathrow	2,584	514,503	199

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2008 Jan - Sep			
London Stanstead	166	7,710	46

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2007			
Belfast London	5,696	888,693	156
(a) Belfast International	770	42,944	56
London Gatwick	386	23,207	60
London Heathrow	0	0	0
London Luton	148	7,008	47
London Stanstead	236	12,729	54
(b) Belfast City	4,926	845,748	172
London City	22	4,539	206
London Gatwick	855	100,657	118
London Heathrow	3,973	736,979	185
London Stanstead	76	3,573	47

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2006			
Belfast London	6,147	1,031,714	168
(a) Belfast International	645	45,634	71
London Gatwick	305	24,524	80
London Heathrow	1	127	127
London Luton	131	8,374	64
London Stanstead	208	12,609	61
(b) Belfast City	5,502	986,079	179
London City	0	0	0
London Gatwick	969	143,197	148
London Heathrow	4512	841,556	187
London Stanstead	21	1,326	63

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2005			
Belfast London	6,226	1,129,904	181
(a) Belfast International	313	24,935	80
London Gatwick	139	12,132	87
London Heathrow	0	0	0
London Luton	71	4,644	65
London Stanstead	103	8,159	79
(b) Belfast City	5,913	1,104,969	187
London City	0	0	0
London Gatwick	745	125,286	168
London Heathrow	5,168	979,683	190
London Stanstead	0	0	0

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2004			
Belfast London	1,602	311,225	194
(a) Belfast International	21	1,251	60
London Gatwick	8	455	57
London Heathrow	0	0	0

	(a) AER LINGUS			(b) EASYJET		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax	Average Ticket Price	Trips	Spend Ex tax	Average Ticket Price
BELFAST INTERNATIONAL	217	£12636	£58	500	£22,332	£45
London Gatwick	0	0	0	296	£14,442	£49
London Heathrow	217	£12,636	£58	0	0	0
London Luton	0	0	0	103	£3,851	£37
London Stanstead	0	0	0	101	£4,039	£40

	All Ticketed Airlines		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax £	Average Ticket Price £
2004			
London Luton	11	677	62
London Stanstead	2	119	60
(b) Belfast City	1,581	309,974	196
London City	9	1,881	209
London Gatwick	207	30,858	149
London Heathrow	1,364	277,033	203
London Stanstead	1	202	202

Cost of Flights

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to flights taken by civil servants between Belfast International Airport and London airports, to detail (i) the number of flights; (ii) total costs of flights; and (iii) average costs, using (a) Aer Lingus; and (b) Easyjet; since 14 January 2008.

(AQW 1817/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The information requested is provided in the attached table.

The information provided covers the period from the 14th January 2008 to date. The Northern Ireland Civil Service Travel Management Company, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, has provided this information. However, any flights booked outside of the Travel Management contract are not included.

Cost of Flights

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to flights taken by civil servants between George Best Belfast City Airport and London airports, to detail (i) the number of flights; (ii) total costs of flights; and (iii) average costs, using (a) BMI; and (b) Flybe; since 14 January 2008. (AQW 1818/09)

	FLYBE			BRITISH MIDLAND		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
	Trips	Spend Ex tax	Average Ticket Price	Trips	Spend Ex tax	Average Ticket Price
GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY	633	£56,258	£89	2,584	£514,503	£199
London City	0	0	0	0	0	0
London Gatwick	633	£56,258	£89	0	0	0
London Heathrow	0	0	0	2,584	£514,503	£199
London Stanstead	0	0	0	0	0	0

Vacant Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assistance his Department is giving to North Down Borough council in the collation of vacant properties in that area. (AQW 1859/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Land and Property Services is currently working closely with all 26 councils to validate the status of properties recorded on the rating database as vacant. North Down Borough Council is acting as Land and Property Services' agent and is being paid for its data validation work by Land and Property Services. This exercise, which will be completed in the coming weeks, will improve the accuracy of the rates database.

Salary Sacrifice Childcare Vouchers Scheme

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given that the 20 October 2008 deadline has passed without the implementation of the Salary Sacrifice Childcare Vouchers scheme, what action he is taking to ensure that this scheme is delivered. (AQW 1899/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The implementation of this scheme will take place following the introduction of the new civil service payroll system. This is a very ambitious and complex project and all elements are being fully tested to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The situation was reviewed on 20 October but, while good progress had been made against the predefined success criteria, it was concluded that it would not be possible to

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The information requested is provided in the attached table.

The information provided covers the period from the 14th January 2008 to date. The Northern Ireland Civil Service Travel Management Company, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, has provided this information. However, any flights booked outside of the Travel Management contract are not included.

implement the new payroll system and consequently the Salary Sacrifice Childcare Voucher scheme by the October pay date.

Salary Sacrifice Childcare Vouchers Scheme

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide an update on the Salary Sacrifice Childcare Vouchers scheme given that the deadline of 20 October 2008 has passed. (AQW 1900/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The implementation of this scheme will take place following the introduction of the new civil service payroll system. This is a very ambitious and complex project and all elements are being fully tested to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The situation was reviewed on 20 October but, while good progress had been made against the predefined success criteria, it was concluded that it would not be possible to implement the new payroll system and consequently the Salary Sacrifice Childcare Voucher scheme by the October pay date.

Civil Service Jobs

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil service jobs in the (i) Carrickfergus; (ii) Larne; and (iii) Newtownabbey Borough Council areas, broken down by office location. (AQW 1913/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number of staff in post in the three district council areas, broken down by office location, is detailed in the attached table.

District Council	Department	Building Address			Staff
Carrickfergus	DEL	Govt. Office	Davy Street	Carrickfergus BT38 8BN	30
Carrickfergus	DSD	Govt. Office	Davy Street	Carrickfergus BT38 8BN	24
Carrickfergus	DOE	Carrickfergus Castle	Belfast Road	Carrickfergus	3
Carrickfergus	DRD	Victoria Street	Carrickfergus	BT38 8AQ	12
Carrickfergus	DOE	Marine Highway	Carrickfergus	BT38 7BG	2
Total Carrickfergus					71
Larne	DARD	Crown Bldgs	Pound Street	Larne BT40 1SH	43
Larne	DSD	Crown Bldgs	Pound Street	Larne BT40 1SH	36
Larne	DOE	Ballyboley Road	Balloran	Larne BT40 2SY	21
Larne	DEL	59 Pound Street	Larne	BT40 1SB	23
Larne	DRD	81 Belfast Road	Larne		13
Total Larne					136
Newtownabbey	DRD	Sandyknowes Depot	543 Antrim Road	BT36 8RF	37
Newtownabbey	DOE	Hydepark Industrial Est	Commercial Way	Mallusk Newtownabbey	31
Newtownabbey	DSD	Crown Bldgs	39 Church Road	Newtownabbey BT36 7RA	47
Newtownabbey	DEL	Govt. Office	41 Church Road	Newtownabbey BT36 7RA	34
Total Newtownabbey					149
TOTAL					356

Notes

Data source as at 1 January 2008.

Figures do not include those on career break.

Figures include both permanent and casual staff.

Events on the Stormont Estate

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline how events on the Stormont Estate are managed and approved. (AQW 1963/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel:

My Department is responsible for managing and approving events held within the Stormont Estate, except in those areas held under licence by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association, which are the responsibility of the licensees.

DFP approved events are managed in line with the Event Safety Guide published by the Health and Safety Executive. Events are managed to minimise disruption

to local residents, promote public safety and to ensure that there is no cost or liability to the Department.

Whenever a request to hold an event within the Stormont Estate is received, my officials meet with the organisers, representatives of the 'blue light' services and local residents groups (if they are interested) to ascertain the viability and suitability of the event for the estate.

Once I have considered my officials' advice, I will then take a decision to either give approval or to refuse permission.

Sufferers of Pleural Plaques

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work of his officials examining the House of Lords ruling on compensation for sufferers of pleural plaques; and to detail a timeframe within which he will make a decision on whether compensation will be made available.

(AQW 2037/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: My Department is continuing to explore the most appropriate way of supporting people diagnosed with pleural plaques and, on 13 October, it published a consultation paper which set out a number of issues for consideration. The consultation exercise will close on 12 January 2009 and, as is customary, officials will then prepare a summary of the responses received and make recommendations on the way forward. At this stage, it is not possible to say when that summary will be completed, as much will depend on the number of responses submitted. I am, however, conscious of the concerns which have arisen in light of the House of Lords' decision and it will be my aim to place proposals on future action before Executive colleagues at the earliest possible opportunity.

Integrated Supply Team Framework Agreement

Ms Purvis asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many projects have been procured through the Integrated Supply Team Framework Agreement, detailing (i) the name and value of each project; and (ii) the projected value of the Framework, including forthcoming projects.

(AQW 2042/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: No projects have been procured through the current Integrated Supply Team framework agreement and as a result of a legal challenge the High Court has ruled that the current framework agreement be set aside. The projected value of contracts to be awarded through the current framework agreement, over its four-year period, would have been dependent on the level of usage by the public sector up to the declared maximum value of £500m to £800m.

National Fraud Initiative

Mr Cobain asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what sets of data it supplied to the Comptroller and Auditor General under the national fraud initiative.

(AQO 827/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The data sets supplied by DFP were:

- Payroll - industrial and non-industrial pay for all bodies within the Northern Ireland Audit Office scope;
- Trade creditors payment history for the period 3 December 2007 to 6 October 2008;
- Trade creditors standing data as at 6 October 2008;
- Pensions – payroll pensions and deferred pensions; and
- Housing benefit awards as at 3 October 2008.

The following data set is to be supplied by DFP:

- Rateable properties and occupants – to be provided prior to January 2009 for pilot reconciliation against electoral register and DETI data.

Impact of the Banking Crisis

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact of the banking crisis on the economy.

(AQO 833/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel:

Hopefully the state of crisis and turmoil within the national and international banking industry has abated. There will undoubtedly be negative consequences for the UK economy, particularly through job losses in financial services and the construction industry.

The Northern Ireland economy however should be relatively insulated. I say this because we have significantly less reliance on the financial services sector. However, our construction sector may be adversely affected in the short term, particularly in the domestic housing sector.

The influence of the public sector within Northern Ireland economy should also ensure that there remains some buoyancy in terms of economic activity relative to other regions of the UK.

Ulster Savings Certificates

Mr Burnside asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration he has given to the reintroduction of Ulster Savings Certificates, given the current financial climate.

(AQO 811/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Ulster Savings Scheme was closed to reinvestments from 31 March 1997. This decision was based on declining interest in the scheme which reflected the fact that other investment opportunities provided by National Savings and commercial banks were able to offer preferential rates. This remains the case and I therefore have no plans to reintroduce a scheme such as Ulster Savings at this time.

European Union

Mr Kennedy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what proportion of the budget is derived from European Union sources. (AQO 810/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Funding from the European Union continues to make a significant contribution to the expenditure of Northern Ireland departments. In the financial year 2008-2009 £327 million of funding for local departments is planned to come from European Union sources, which is equivalent to 3.4% of planned expenditure as set out in the Budget 2008-2011 document.

Issue of Birth Certificates

Rev Dr Robert Coulter asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to increase registration checks for the issue of birth certificates. (AQO 814/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Registrar General is statutorily required to furnish any person with a certified copy of a birth entry (known as a birth certificate). Birth certificates are public documents (although individuals must state their reason when applying for a certificate) and it is clearly indicated on the document that they do not constitute proof of identity of the persons presenting them. The Civil Registration Bill (Northern Ireland) 2008, currently progressing through the Assembly, will enable the General Register Office to notify birth certificate information (as well as deaths, marriages and civil partnership information) directly to central and local government departments and approved third parties to assist them in the discharge of their functions.

In time this should serve to reduce the need for the issue of certified copies.

Postponement of Monitoring Round

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the implications of the postponement of the October monitoring round. (AQO 858/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The September Monitoring Round was not postponed. Monitoring returns were received from departments, a draft Executive Paper was produced with comments received from my Ministerial colleagues. The only delay has been in terms of formal Executive approval for my recommendations, which I am now seeking under Urgent Procedure.

Approval under Urgent Procedure was required because a delay in the confirmation of the outcome of

any monitoring round will significantly constrain the ability of departments to either fully utilise additional

allocations or to put in place contingency plans in respect of the spending bids not recommended in light of the broader financial context.

Public Sector Procurement Contracts

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of public sector procurement contracts awarded in 2007/08 included social clauses. (AQO 889/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In line with Public Procurement Policy all contracts awarded by public bodies in Northern Ireland have social clauses relating to equality of opportunity and health and safety considerations.

During the period 2007/2008, forty nine contracts were awarded which included additional social clauses relating to skills development and site safety in the construction industry; use of fair trade products and development of essential skills in the workforce. This figure equates to 1.7% of the total contracts awarded during that period.

Public Sector Pay Demands

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on budgetary pressures arising from public sector pay demands. (AQO 886/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: On behalf of the Executive, I have responsibility for approving all public sector pay awards. Public sector pay accounts for approximately half of Northern Ireland's current expenditure so it's important to control pay growth. Any additional budgetary pressures arising from public sector pay demands, such as equal pay, will have to be dealt with by allocating and prioritising public expenditure through the budgetary process.

Vacant Properties

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many councils have miscalculated their estimated income due to vacant properties. (AQO 931/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: I understand that this question relates to 2007/2008 financial year.

Vacant domestic properties, and some vacant non-domestic properties, result in a loss of revenue

to district councils. In December 2006 councils were provided with an Estimated Penny Product to assist in the striking of their district rates for 2007/2008. A forecast of vacancy losses was included. However, the outturn revenue losses from vacancies were higher than was forecast.

It is not only vacant property that contributes to losses in revenue for councils, as changes to the tax base, such as the demolition of properties and reductions in the rateable values of properties, also affect the overall losses on the income received by councils.

In this context seven councils received less rate revenue income than expected due to the losses being higher than forecast.

Regional and District Rate

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to revise the regional and district rate, to provide incentives to the business sector given the present economic downturn.

(AQO 812/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The current uncertain economic climate coupled with the volatility in financial markets will clearly be of great concern to many of our local businesses.

First of all we need to remind ourselves that there is a limit to what the rating system can afford and deliver in terms of providing incentives to the business sector, even during the present economic downturn. There are plenty of other ways of delivering support than through the rating system. Responsibility for supporting our business sector lies with all Ministers which is why the Executive has made the achievement of a dynamic, innovative local economy a key priority in the Programme for Government.

Having said that, this Department has already taken a number of steps which will help the business sector during this time.

The district rate is of course the responsibility of each of the 26 district councils and the Department therefore has no authority over it.

As the Member may know, however, at the last Budget, it was announced that the non domestic regional rate will not increase in real terms over the CSR period. This is already bringing benefits for local businesses and will also provide more certainty with regard to these costs as they plan ahead.

In addition to this, industrial rates have been frozen at 30%, which is of particular benefit to our vital manufacturing sector. This will save around £12.5m in costs for manufacturing firms this year alone.

A report was also commissioned by the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland which looked at the case for a rate relief scheme for small businesses. This concluded that a broadly based scheme was unlikely to be effective in supporting small businesses and the DFP Committee agreed with that assessment.

I am currently considering proposals for a targeted scheme aimed at one particularly vulnerable sector which provides essential services to our community. I need to be satisfied that it is necessary, effective and affordable before I bring this matter to the Assembly but I hope to do so shortly. There are no quick fixes, however and any new relief scheme requires new legislation, which would take over a year to work through.

I think that these represent balanced, sensible measures which will benefit a wide range of businesses in different sectors and will be particularly welcome during this time of economic uncertainty.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he is taking to implement all of the recommendations in the Bain Report on the Location of Public Sector Jobs.

(AQO 929/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The report which was published by Professor Bain on 30 September is the result of an independent review. The recommendations have to be carefully considered by government before decisions on a way forward can be reached. As a first step I have written to Executive colleagues to gather opinions from Ministers and these, together with the views of the Finance Committee and the Assembly debate on 21 October, will be useful in assessing the degree of consensus on the proposals that have been put forward.

HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Locum Consultants

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) highest hourly rate paid to a locum consultant in surgery; and (ii) average hourly rate paid to locum consultants in surgery, in each hospital, for each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 1464/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Not all Trusts were able to confirm the average hourly rates for the past three years due to the disproportionate cost of

retrieving the information. However, the information received indicates that the average hourly rate in 2007/8 was £61.90 and highest hourly rate for the same period was £64.47.

Locally Qualified Personnel

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to confirm the number of locally qualified personnel entering the Health Service, as a percentage of total recruitment, for each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1467/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally.

Health Provisions

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to give a breakdown of all new health provisions he has announced since taking office. (AQW 1468/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Among the new health provisions I have announced since I took this post are:

- New south west hospital in Enniskillen
- Enhanced local hospital in Omagh
- Health & Social Care Centres in Andersonstown and Shankill
- Review of junior doctor training and recruitment
- New technology to support independent living
- Orthopaedic Integrated Assessment and Treatment Services
- Zero Tolerance Campaign on attacks against staff
- Funding for children with complex needs
- Funding to improve inadequate respite services
- Award of full nurses' pay rise
- Further protection for vulnerable adults
- £50m capital investment across the South Eastern Trust area
- CT scanner at Lagan Valley Hospital
- New screening programme to prevent blindness among people with diabetes
- Independent review of autism
- Maternity allowance for student nurses and midwives
- £4.4m investment in health service dentistry
- Deliberate Self-Harm Registry pilot scheme in the Western Health & Social Services Board area
- All-island mental health promotion campaign
- £15.2m capital investment for Craigavon Hospital
- New maternity unit at Ulster Hospital
- Mental Health & Learning Disability Nursing recruitment campaign
- Nursing care standards for patient food in hospital
- £16m Health & Social Care Centre in Portadown
- Hospital visiting policy
- Location of £2m centre for rape and sexual assault victims
- Improved recruitment to medical training
- Independent review of Omagh house fire tragedy
- Strategy to promote equality and human rights in the health service
- European Centre of Excellence for health care technology
- £46m investment in chronic conditions
- £5m centre of excellence for research into complex public health issues
- Primary Care diabetes service
- New Standards for care homes
- £9m investment in clean and safer care
- Single rooms in new hospitals in Northern Ireland
- Regional suicide prevention hot line
- New Dunmurry Fire Station
- Independent Review of C Difficile outbreak in Northern Trust area
- £1.4m funding for day care centre for the elderly in Ballybeen
- Specialist fracture service at Craigavon Hospital
- £6m for prisoner healthcare transfer
- Emergency care project for patients attending A&E and out of hours services
- Investment to improve emergency response times in south west
- New satellite radiotherapy centre for Altnagelvin
- Child care allowance for student nurses
- Community midwife unit at new Downe Hospital
- New Regional Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre at NI Ambulance Service
- Free car parking for the very ill and their families at hospitals across N.Ireland
- £14m investment in stroke services
- Properties for Women's Aid Londonderry
- New fire appliances for north west
- Five year regional strategy for tackling sexual violence and abuse in N.Ireland
- £12m investment in better services for heart disease
- £2.6m cardiac catheterisation laboratory at Craigavon Hospital

- £190m capital investment at Ulster Hospital
- Development of action plan for autism services
- Agenda for Change rates of pay achieved
- Legal age of sale of tobacco products increased to 18
- £8m to Trusts to help them cope with increased energy costs
- 24/7 nursing cover for Rathlin Island
- Cervical cancer vaccination programme
- £3.5m investment in maternity services in Craigavon
- Additional investment in student midwives in Southern Trust area
- Abolition of prescription charges
- £17m capital investment in ambulance fleet
- Public Inquiry on C Difficile outbreak
- Review of maternity services in Belfast Trust area
- Opening of Carlisle Health and Care Centre
- £26m capital investment in the Fire & Rescue Service

Trained Nurses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses have been trained, over the last 3 years. (AQW 1471/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The numbers of commissioned pre-registration nurses trained in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years are as follows:

Academic year 2007-2008	730
Academic year 2006-2007	730
Academic Year 2005-2006	730

Trained Nurses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses are to be trained, over the next 3 years. (AQW 1472/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The numbers of nurses and midwives in training for academic year 2008-2009 are as follows:

	Commissioned places
Nursing	724
Midwifery	62
Open University Part-Time	36
Total	822

At present, there are no plans to reduce the number of commissioned places in 2009/10 and 2010/11. A review of the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce is currently underway and it will help inform future workforce demand and supply.

Access NI

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to confirm that Access NI has the legal right to do background checks on anyone moving to Northern Ireland from the mainland UK or from abroad. (AQW 1473/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 requires that individuals who wish to work with children in regulated position or vulnerable adults in a care position, either in paid or voluntary positions, undergo a pre-employment vetting check.

Before a pre-employment vetting check can be undertaken as part of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 arrangements, the individual applying for the position must have given their approval to the check taking place.

Other Departments have similar requirements for specific areas which fall under their responsibility e.g. the Department of Education.

With regard to the legal basis on which AccessNI undertake such checks this is a matter for the Northern Ireland Office.

Health Centre in Ballycastle

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has any plans to visit the health centre in Ballycastle. (AQW 1474/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have no immediate plans to visit Ballycastle Health Centre. However I may have an opportunity to do so in the future.

Wheelchair Users

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail which health centres provide adequate facilities to accommodate wheelchair users; and what plans he has to carry out an audit of health centres to determine their ability to meet the needs of wheelchair users. (AQW 1475/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that all health

centres provide facilities to accommodate wheelchair users with the exception of Greyabbey Health Centre. Greyabbey is an old building which is only used periodically and has been found impractical to improve from a DDA perspective; it is the subject of a review of Primary Care Services within the Trust. In the case of Ballycastle Health Centre there is wheelchair access to the building, common areas and treatment area. However, as I indicated in my answer to AQW 795/09 which relates specifically to Ballycastle Health Centre, the Trust is currently assessing what further work can be done within the current budget which will include improving wheelchair access. Separately, I have asked Health Estates to confirm with Health and Social Care Trusts the position regarding accessibility by wheelchair users to all relevant facilities for which Trusts are responsible.

Minor Ailments Scheme

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) patients are currently benefiting from the Minor Ailments Scheme; and (ii) pharmacists are currently participating in the scheme. (AQW 1481/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) A record of the number of patients who have benefited from the scheme is not currently held. However, the latest figures available from the Central Services Agency from April 2008 to July 2008 show a total of 74,909 consultations were carried out. The number of consultations may not equate to the number of patients as some patients may present on more than one occasion for a consultation. It should be noted that figures for the number of consultations carried out under the enhanced service from the 1 August 2008 are not yet available.
- (ii) The number of pharmacists currently participating in the scheme are as follows:

Southern Health Board	4
Northern Health Board	4
Eastern Health Board	1
Western Health Board	1

QAA Regulations

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to clarify that all Health Service staff are following QAA regulations. (AQW 1503/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Quality Assurance Agency is an independent body tasked with defining academic standards and quality in higher education.

In Northern Ireland, the Quality Assurance Agency works with the Department of Employment and Learning and higher education institutions, including Queen's University and University of Ulster, to maintain quality and standards of academic awards.

My Department commissions a number of undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare courses from both QUB and UU; these include nursing, medical, dental and allied health professional courses. In addition to these academic programmes being reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency, they must be validated by appropriate professional bodies.

Personality Disorder

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to change the terminology in the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 to include people with borderline personality disorder. (AQW 1522/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Following recommendations contained in the Bamford Review, my Department plans to issue in the near future a consultation document on a legislative framework for taking forward new mental health and mental capacity legislation in Northern Ireland. The framework will contain proposals to redefine mental disorder.

Health Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to the Health Service of employing agency staff, for the last 3 years. (AQW 1528/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The cost of employing Agency staff in our Health Trusts over each of the last three complete financial years is as follows:

Year	Cost to Health Trusts	% of total salaries and wages bill
1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008	£39,926,000	2.50
1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007	£40,608,000	2.65
1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006	£38,506,000	2.76

Health Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people work for the Health Service. (AQW 1531/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: According to the Human Resource Management System, as at 30 June 2008 there were 60,281 (51,646.95 whole-time equivalent) staff working in Health & Social Care, excluding bank staff, home helps and staff with a whole-time equivalent less than or equal to 0.03. There are a further 17,200 of these staff, whose whole-time equivalent cannot be accurately provided due to the variable or sessional nature of their working pattern.

A breakdown of the Health & Social Care workforce can be found on the DHSSPS website at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/work_force/stats-research.htm

Health Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the cost to the Health Service of training new nurses. (AQW 1532/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the rates for academic year 2008-2009, the cost in Northern Ireland of training an average student nurse to qualification is in the region of £37,000 per student.

Wet Age Related Macular Degeneration

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if the guidance published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on the treatment of wet age related macular degeneration has been endorsed by his Department; and when it will be implemented. (AQW 1533/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on the use of ranibizumab (Lucentis) and pegaptanib (Macugen) for the treatment of wet age related macular degeneration (wet AMD) has recently been endorsed by my Department as applicable to Northern Ireland.

My Department expects the HSC to put plans in place within three months to facilitate implementation of the guidance. Providing these treatments in line with the NICE guidance will require a significant expansion of the existing service. Recruitment of the additional staff needed to deliver the new level of service safely and effectively is currently under way.

In the meantime, Health and Social Services Boards will continue to fund treatment with wet AMD drugs for patients with the greatest clinical priority.

Causeway Hospital

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment the view of medical specialists and the chairman of NICHHS, about the introduction of a stroke unit to the Causeway Hospital; and (ii) if his Department will review the case for the establishment of a specialist stroke unit at the Causeway Hospital. (AQW 1538/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In June, I announced a new strategy for stroke services in Northern Ireland. To support the implementation of the measures recommended within that strategy, I have allocated an additional £14m over the next three years, and thereafter a recurrent investment of £9m, to improve outcomes for stroke patients.

A regional stroke implementation group has been established to bring forward a detailed implementation plan which will address each of the measures set out in the Stroke Strategy. The group includes membership from Health and Social Services Boards, Trusts and the voluntary sector, including Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke. Within the work of that implementation work, it will be for Boards and Trusts to determine the number and location of specialist stroke units required to meet the needs of the populations they serve.

Underage and Binge Drinking

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department is taking to encourage young people to drink less alcohol. (AQW 1542/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD) identifies addressing underage and binge drinking as key priorities. Regionally, a range of public information campaigns have been undertaken to provide more information to children and young people on the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse, including the publication of leaflets and websites.

At the local level, the four Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams commission and fund a range of services, initiatives and programmes in support of their local action plans. These provide support to children and young people's groups that are working directly or indirectly towards improving young people's awareness of the dangers of alcohol misuse. Examples include:

- targeted education and prevention programmes aimed at vulnerable young people;
- community & family support services;
- alternative criminal justice options; and
- outreach services.

However, young people's drinking cannot be effectively tackled by my Department in isolation. We are therefore in the process of developing a cross-sectoral, integrated Young People's Drinking Action Plan, and this plan will look at reducing young people's demand for alcohol, further restricting supply, and providing effective treatment and support for those who require additional help.

Dental Practices

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact on older people of dental practices becoming fully or partly private. (AQW 1546/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At present, there is no legal or contractual obligation on General Dental Practitioners, who are independent contractors, to accept any patient for health service treatment, no matter what their individual circumstances are.

My Department, however, is currently in negotiations with the dental profession to move away from these arrangements and into new contracting arrangements with dental practitioners which will modernise dental services and ensure that everyone, including older people, have access to high quality, effective dental care.

I acknowledge that older people, among others, may experience difficulties when their dentist decides to cease providing Health Service treatment. My officials are working on a tender for additional dental services throughout Northern Ireland, with an eye to having identified a preferred bidder(s) for this work in the New Year. When these additional 36 dentists are in place, I fully expect the current dental access problem to ease considerably for everyone in Northern Ireland. In the interim, the Health Boards' Dental Directors are endeavouring to help people access health service dentistry wherever possible.

Dental Care Provision

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what proposals he has to ensure 24 hour dental care provision in Belfast. (AQW 1547/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Health Service dental care is delivered

during normal working hours. All general dental practitioners have a professional and ethical obligation to provide a comprehensive service for their registered patients, which should include appropriate emergency provision. Health Service dentists are required under regulations to provide emergency cover for patients requiring prompt care and treatment. Patients should clarify with their practice what arrangements are in place when the practice is not normally open.

In addition the Hospital Dental Service within the Eastern Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB) area which includes Belfast, provides a 24 hour / 365 day on-call service through Accident and Emergency departments at the Royal Victoria Hospital and the Ulster Hospital with a remit to cover patients presenting with significant trauma, spreading infection or haemorrhage. Patients attending who are assessed as not falling into one or more of these categories are advised to attend a high-street dentist for necessary care.

Furthermore, the EHSSB also provide a Relief of Dental Pain clinic at Belfast City Hospital operates the following hours:

- 7:00pm – 10:00pm every night of the year;
- 10:00am – 1:00pm every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday morning; and
- 2:30pm – 5:30pm every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday afternoon.

Anyone presenting with an urgent dental problem can attend and staff on duty will deal with everyone who is assessed as requiring care during these hours. Care provided is limited to what the on-duty dentist considers is appropriate in the circumstances to best relieve the patient's immediate pain.

It is not deemed appropriate to provide 24 hour access for all dental care. There are, however, a few dental conditions that require 24 hour access: significant trauma, uncontrolled bleeding and spreading infection are the only 3 oral conditions which require 24 hour cover and this cover is provided by the A&E departments as detailed above.

I am satisfied therefore that emergency dental care provision in Belfast is appropriate and meets the obligation of our health and social care service..

Health Service

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment of the trends in the age profile of the population; and (ii) to forecast change of provision that the Health Service may need to take as a consequence of these population trends. (AQW 1548/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Our population over 65 is set to more than double in the next 50 years.

As we look to the future, we must use our resources more effectively and efficiently, avoiding inappropriate hospital admission and delayed discharge. My Department is firmly committed to continuing to transform the way that services are delivered in our communities to ensure access to high quality services that will enable older people to live in their own homes with safety and dignity.

Smoking Ban

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) fines; and (ii) warnings have been issued for smoking in a public place, in each Health and Social Services Board area, since the ban was introduced. (AQW 1551/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Enforcement of smoke-free legislation is the responsibility of district councils' Environmental Health Departments. Council areas are not co-terminus with Health and Social Services Board boundaries and, as a consequence, the information requested has been set out in the table below by council groupings. The table covers the offence of smoking in a smoke-free place up to and including 30 June 2008, the latest date for which information is available.

Area	Fixed Penalty Notices Issued	Written Warnings Given
Belfast	14	43
Eastern	7	70
Northern	17	48
Southern	6	170
Western	3	63
Total	47	394

Skin Cancer

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to reduce the incidences of skin cancer. (AQW 1559/09)

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
1	12,517											
2	12,922	12,922										

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department issued a melanoma strategy in 1998 with the overall aim of reducing morbidity and mortality from skin cancers, especially malignant melanoma in Northern Ireland. The Department has provided funding to assist with the implementation of this strategy, with resources being deployed on research and in raising public awareness as to the risks of sun exposure.

The strategy has since been reviewed and the Department is currently examining options, both in the short and long term, for developing a new strategy and action plan which will reflect strategic changes and recent research. A number of relevant interested bodies will be invited to participate in this work.

A significant risk factor affecting the incidence of skin cancer may be the use of artificial tanning devices such as sun beds. The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) provides advice to Government Departments and the Devolved Administrations in relation to the health effects of natural and man-made radiation. COMARE has been asked by the four UK Health Departments to provide advice on the evidence relating to the health effects of sunbed use and to make recommendations. The COMARE report is expected by the end of 2008 and is likely to inform future policy development.

In addition, the Sunbed Working Group of the Northern Ireland Melanoma Strategy Implementation Group (NIMSIG) is currently examining issues relating to sunbeds and their use.

Salary Bands

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of all salary bands in the Western Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1586/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The remuneration paid to HSC staff depends on the job related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Non-medical staff (with the exception of the most senior managers) have their jobs assessed using the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation Scheme which determines the correct basic pay. Rates of pay relating to each pay band are set out in the table below

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
3	13,269	13,269										
4	13,617	13,617										
5		14,023										
6		14,428										
7		14,834	14,834									
8		15,356	15,356									
9		15,950	15,950									
10			16,307									
11			16,781									
12			17,316	17,316								
13			17,732	17,732								
14				18,385								
15				19,038								
16				19,631								
17				20,225	20,225							
18				20,818	20,818							
19					21,373							
20					22,085							
21					22,797							
22					23,450							
23					24,103	24,103						
24					25,054	25,054						
25					26,123	26,123						
26						27,191						
27						28,141						
28						29,091	29,091					
29						30,041	30,041					
30						31,109	31,109					
31						32,653	32,653					
32							33,603					
33							34,672					
34							35,859					
35							37,106	37,106				
36							38,352	38,352				
37								39,896				
38								41,439				
39								43,221	43,221			
40								44,527	44,527			

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
41									46,782			
42									49,394			
43									52,007	52,007		
44									53,432	53,432		
45										55,806		
46										58,419		
47										62,337	62,337	
48										64,118	64,118	
49											66,790	
50											70,055	
51											73,617	73,617
52											77,179	77,179
53												80,883
54												84,765
55												88,835
56												93,098

Salary Bands

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of all salary bands in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1587/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The remuneration paid to HSC staff

depends on the job related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Non-medical staff (with the exception of the most senior managers) have their jobs assessed using the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation Scheme which determines the correct basic pay. Rates of pay relating to each pay band are set out in the table below

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
1	12,517											
2	12,922	12,922										
3	13,269	13,269										
4	13,617	13,617										
5		14,023										
6		14,428										
7		14,834	14,834									
8		15,356	15,356									
9		15,950	15,950									
10			16,307									
11			16,781									
12			17,316	17,316								

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
13			17,732	17,732								
14				18,385								
15				19,038								
16				19,631								
17				20,225	20,225							
18				20,818	20,818							
19					21,373							
20					22,085							
21					22,797							
22					23,450							
23					24,103	24,103						
24					25,054	25,054						
25					26,123	26,123						
26						27,191						
27						28,141						
28						29,091	29,091					
29						30,041	30,041					
30						31,109	31,109					
31						32,653	32,653					
32							33,603					
33							34,672					
34							35,859					
35							37,106	37,106				
36							38,352	38,352				
37								39,896				
38								41,439				
39								43,221	43,221			
40								44,527	44,527			
41									46,782			
42									49,394			
43									52,007	52,007		
44									53,432	53,432		
45										55,806		
46										58,419		
47										62,337	62,337	
48										64,118	64,118	
49											66,790	
50											70,055	

Point	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8				Band 9
								Range A	Range B	Range C	Range D	
51											73,617	73,617
52											77,179	77,179
53												80,883
54												84,765
55												88,835
56												93,098

Salary Bands

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of all salary bands in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1588/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The remuneration paid to HSC staff

depends on the job related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Non-medical staff (with the exception of the most senior managers) have their jobs assessed using the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation Scheme which determines the correct basic pay. Rates of pay relating to each pay band are set out in the table below

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51											73,617	73,617
52											77,179	77,179
53												80,883
54												84,765
55												88,835
56												93,098

Salary Bands

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of all salary bands in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1589/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The remuneration paid to HSC staff

depends on the job related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Non-medical staff (with the exception of the most senior managers) have their jobs assessed using the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation Scheme which determines the correct basic pay. Rates of pay relating to each pay band are set out in the table below

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Home Help Assistance

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many requests there have been for home help assistance in the (i) Carrickfergus; and (ii) Larne, areas, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1590/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the form requested.

Health Village in Banbridge

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on progress with the health village in Banbridge. (AQW 1600/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The current proposals are for a new Health and Care Centre along with a new Learning Disability Day Centre within the Banbridge Community Health Village.

The Southern HSC Trust is currently finalising the business case for this project and it is expected to be resubmitted to my Department within the next few weeks. Subject to the normal approval process the business case will need to be appraised by the Department of Finance and Personnel before a final decision can be made. I anticipate a decision on this new development will be made in the Autumn.

This project is still a high priority for the Southern Trust and was included in their list of priority projects submitted as part of the recent Review of Capital Priorities, which completed at the end of September.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the most recent report by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on the Blood Transfusion Service. (AQW 1638/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am fully aware of the findings of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) arising from its inspection of the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) in April 2008. While there was no evidence of any patient harm, there was a clear need for urgent action to address the issues identified.

I have ensured that NIBTS is implementing a comprehensive programme of actions and that this work is given the highest priority by the Agency. I have been advised that substantial progress has already been made. A full re-inspection of the NIBTS by MHRA will take place in November 2008 to

confirm the Agency is meeting the requirements of the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005.

I shall ensure that the NI population continues to have access to safe, high quality blood supplies.

Salary Bands

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of all salary bands in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1649/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The remuneration paid to HSC staff depends on the job related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Non-medical staff (with the exception of the most senior managers) have their jobs assessed using the Agenda for Change Job Evaluation Scheme which determines the correct basic pay. Rates of pay relating to each pay band are set out in the table below

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18				20,818	20,818							
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52											77,179	77,179
53												80,883
54												84,765
55												88,835
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Breast Screening

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when will free breast screening be put in place for people 65 years old and over. (AQW 1650/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Currently, women between the age of 50 and 64 are routinely invited for breast screening. My Department plans to extend the age range to include women up to the age of 70 from March 2009. There are no plans to screen women who are over 70 years old.

New Omagh Hospital

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of the new Omagh Hospital. (AQW 1651/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The new Omagh Enhanced Local Hospital Complex will cost £190million and will include the Core Hospital, a Health & Care Centre, Mental Health Facility along with Community and Support Services.

The new Omagh Enhanced Local Hospital Complex is planned to be completed in 2013.

Limavady Fire Station

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if Limavady Fire Station will benefit from the additional funding for the Fire and Rescue Service announced on 16 October 2008. (AQW 1687/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Yes. I refer the honourable member to the answer I gave to David McClarty during Oral Questions on 25th February 2008 when I indicated that Limavady is on the list of Stations for upgrade. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is currently looking for a suitable site in the town for a new station.

Learning Disabilities

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to report on new investments being made for supported living for persons with learning disabilities, in the Budget. (AQW 1690/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department will be investing a total of £33m in learning disability services over the next three years resulting in an additional £17m

recurrent investment. Some of this investment will be used to provide the appropriate community infrastructure and support mechanisms to facilitate supported living.

The Department for Social Development's Supporting People Fund provides Housing Support Services for people with a learning disability. Seven schemes are scheduled to commence in the current financial year with a further 14 schemes scheduled during the following 2 years.

A number of additional schemes have been identified which will be required to meet health and social care requirements relating to the implementation of Bamford Review recommendations in the next 5 years. These schemes are at various stages of planning but have not yet been progressed to the Supporting People Capital Programme.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will ring fence £1m of the £164m investment for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure that the second appliance remains in Portstewart, for at least the next 10 years of the investment period. (AQW 1715/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Determining priorities for the capital budget is a matter for the Chief Fire Officer and the Board of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposal to withdraw the second pumping appliance from Portstewart Fire Station was issued for public consultation on 1st October and is available on the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service website. No final decisions will be taken until the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has had an opportunity to consider the responses to the consultation.

Minor Ailments Scheme

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to encourage pharmacists to re-enter the Minor Ailments Scheme. (AQW 1716/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The expanded Minor Ailments Scheme remains available to community pharmacists and I hope more will take it up, since it provides a valuable service to patients. A remuneration offer has been made which I believe is fair and reasonable.

I have been proactive in encouraging pharmacists to join the scheme as have my officials. At the end of June 2008, before the introduction of the enhanced Scheme on 1 August 2008, I invited the

Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee (PCC) to meet with me to discuss their concerns. PCC are the representative body for community pharmacy and act on their behalf in negotiations with the Department.

This offer to meet was declined. I wrote again to PCC in mid-August 2008 extending the same invitation to meet. On this occasion PCC accepted the offer and a meeting took place on 15 September 2008 at which there was a useful exchange on the Minor Ailments Scheme.

I agreed to consider the points raised by PCC and I am happy to say that another meeting has been scheduled to take place shortly to discuss the way forward.

Cataract Operations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cataract operations have been carried out by the Health Service in the Independent Sector, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1718/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of cataract operations carried out by the Health Service in the Independent Sector, during each of the last five years, is not collected centrally by the Department. Provision of such data by Health and Social Care Trusts would incur a disproportionate cost.

Cataract Operations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cataract operations have been carried out by the Health Service in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1719/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of cataract operations carried out in Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years is detailed below:

Year	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Cataract Operations	7,676	8,513	8,391	9,441	8,718

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

These figures do not relate to individuals, as a person may have more than one cataract procedure carried out in a year.

Cataract Operations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how many people are diagnosed with cataracts each year. (AQW 1720/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of admissions to Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland with a diagnosis of cataracts in each of the past five years is detailed below:

Year	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Admissions	7,873	8,776	8,652	9,744	9,008

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Deaths and discharges are used to approximate admissions. These figures do not equate to individuals as a person may be admitted to hospital more than one in a year or across a number of years.

Cataract Operations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the number of people who are currently waiting for cataract operations. (AQW 1721/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The inpatient waiting time position, for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, the most recent quarter for which official data are available, is outlined in the table below.

	Time Waiting in Weeks			
	0 - 6	> 6 - 13	> 13 - 21	> 21
No. of people waiting for admission to hospital in NI for cataract surgery	1075	1194	416	0

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset.

The average waiting time for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, was 57 days.

Cataract Operations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average waiting time for cataract operations. (AQW 1722/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The inpatient waiting time position,

for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, the most recent quarter for which official data are available, is outlined in the table below.

	Time Waiting in Weeks			
	0 - 6	> 6 - 13	> 13 - 21	> 21
No. of people waiting for admission to hospital in NI for cataract surgery	1075	1194	416	0

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset.

The average waiting time for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, was 57 days.

Musgrave Park Hospital

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if a decision has been made regarding the closure of 20 orthopaedic beds in Musgrave Park Hospital; and to detail what impact the closure will have on nursing staff. (AQW 1724/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Following a review in relation to admissions and day procedure cases within Orthopaedics, the Belfast Trust has taken the decision to close a 20 bed orthopaedic unit at Musgrave Park Hospital. This will take place on a phased basis. The decision will not affect the level of service provision to patients.

Discussions have been held with the staff members likely to be affected in order to discuss their needs and options. There will be no redundancies.

Anaesthetists

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of anaesthetists currently working in the Health Service, in each hospital; (ii) the total number of anaesthetists there should be; (iii) the total shortfall; and (iv) how many operations have been rescheduled and delayed because of this shortfall. (AQW 1725/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Number of Anaesthetists employed and Anaesthetist Vacancies in the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Hospital as at 30th September 2008

Hospital	Anaesthetists Employed		Vacancies for Anaesthetists	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Altnagelvin Hospital	27	27.00	5	4.30
Antrim / Whiteabbey Hospital	22	22.00	7	7.00
Royal Victoria Hospital	119	113.43	1	1.00
Belfast City / Musgrave Park Hospitals	51	47.79	2	1.20
Causeway Hospital	11	11.00	2	2.00
Craigavon Area Hospital	20	19.50	0	0.00
Daisy Hill Hospital	11	11.00	3	3.00
Downe Hospital	2	2.00	2	2.00
Erne Hospital	8	8.00	1	1.00
Lagan Valley Hospital	7	7.00	0	0.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	13	12.55	1	0.50
Mid Ulster Hospital	4	4.00	0	0.00
Tyrone County Hospital	5	4.80	1	1.00
Ulster Hospital	52	51.80	0	0.00
Total	352	341.87	25	23.00

Source: HSC Trusts

WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent.

Staff and vacancy information includes Anaesthetists working at all medical grades (including Consultant, Staff Grade, Associate Specialist, Specialty Registrar and Foundation House Officer).

The table above sets out the number of anaesthetists as requested, showing 352 in post, a shortfall of 25 on the total funded. Although no data is collected regarding delayed or rescheduled operations, data on operating list cancellations shows no correlation with these vacancies.

Medical Registration

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the guidelines produced by his Department (i) on which nationalities can and cannot be medically registered; and (ii) the registration documentation required for each nationality. (AQW 1726/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Registration with a General Practitioner in Northern Ireland is not based on a person's nationality. The entire entitlement to health service treatment process, of which registration with a GP Practice is a part, is based on whether a person is ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, and is contained in guidance Circular HSS (PCD) 10/2000 issued by the Department in 2000.

Any person intending to live in Northern Ireland for a period of not less than six months is considered to be "ordinarily resident". Documentation which they will need to register with a GP practice can consist of a valid National Identity Card, passport or European Health Insurance Card for nationals of other EU countries, along with valid visas or work permits for those people coming to Northern Ireland from outside of the European Economic Area.

Alcohol Consumption

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the relationship between the pricing of alcohol for sale and problems associated with alcohol consumption. (AQW 1740/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Research has shown a clear relationship between price and levels of alcohol consumption, and also between price and levels of alcohol related harm. I am therefore particularly concerned that research has shown that, in real terms, alcohol is 62% more affordable today than it was in 1980.

However, there are other factors which impact on alcohol consumption and related harm, such as its availability, marketing and promotion. These are issues which are not the responsibility of any one Government Department, and therefore I will continue to address these issues with my colleagues in the Executive. I will also consider how we can address the issue of price locally, and raise the issue with my colleagues in the other parts of the UK.

Domestic Violence

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of hospital or GP treatments that were the result of domestic violence or abuse, broken down by (i) male; and (ii) female. (AQW 1754/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available.

Social Services At Risk Register

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children currently on the Social Services 'At Risk' Register, broken down by District Council area. (AQW 1756/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the form requested.

Hoax Ambulance Calls

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average number of hoax ambulance calls received per week in each constituency, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1757/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the table below.

Constituency	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Belfast East	3.7	3.3	3.4
Belfast North	6.4	6.3	6.7
Belfast South	7.3	6.1	7.1
Belfast West	8.6	6.5	5.5
East Antrim	2.8	2.0	2.1
East Londonderry	3.4	2.8	2.9
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	3.0	3.5	2.2
Foyle	6.6	6.1	5.7
Lagan Valley	3.1	3.0	2.7
Mid Ulster	2.7	3.9	2.4
Newry and Armagh	4.3	4.6	4.5
North Antrim	4.4	2.9	3.1
North Down	4.9	3.0	2.3

Constituency	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
South Antrim	3.2	2.6	2.6
South Down	4.0	3.5	3.9
Strangford	3.2	3.4	2.8
Upper Bann	4.0	4.0	4.1
West Tyrone	3.6	3.5	3.3
Undetermined origin	90.9	87.9	90.0

Note: Figures include hoax calls, instances where there was no case or nothing found at the scene and where the caller hung up without giving details.

New Medicines

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average time it takes the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to introduce new medicines to Northern Ireland. (AQW 1766/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is not responsible for the introduction of new medicines into Northern Ireland. NICE make recommendations on the most clinical and cost effective treatments for use in the National Health Service in England and Wales.

My Department has established a link with NICE whereby all guidance published by the Institute from 1 July 2006 is reviewed locally for its applicability to Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, is endorsed by the Department for implementation here.

My Department currently aims to issue advice to local Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations on the applicability of individual NICE guidelines here within three months of NICE issuing their final guidance. On receipt of this advice, HSC organisations have usually three months to put plans in place to facilitate implementation of the guidance. This process is currently under review.

Community Pharmacy Contracts

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why it has taken 5 years to agree new Community Pharmacy Contracts. (AQW 1767/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department's community pharmacy contract negotiating team has been negotiating a new contract with the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee (PCC), the representative body for

community pharmacy, since April 2004. To date a total of 11 formal contract meetings have been held.

So far the main developments have been a jointly agreed framework for the new contract, preparation by the departmental team of detailed service specifications and standards for the services to be provided, a survey commissioned jointly by the Department and PCC into the costs of running pharmacies in Northern Ireland and some discussion on introducing certain services as the first part of a phased approach to implementing the new contract.

The Department has made a number of offers to PCC in relation to the provision of a Minor Ailments Service and Repeat Dispensing, two key initiatives of the new contract. Unfortunately PCC have to date rejected all offers and for some time negotiations have stalled.

While I am clearly disappointed with the rate of progress on the new pharmacy contract, particularly in recent months, I am convinced that real progress is possible and I believe that the time is now right to look to the future.

I see a key role for community pharmacy in providing a range of services for local people and I will be looking to the profession to engage meaningfully with my officials to ensure that patients in Northern Ireland benefit from the services the rest of the UK enjoy. My door is always open to the representatives of community pharmacy and indeed I am meeting PCC again in the near future. I firmly believe that the new contract is the way ahead for community pharmacy and I believe that, with willingness on both sides, real progress can be made in the coming months.

New Downpatrick Hospital

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of the new Downpatrick Hospital. (AQW 1768/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The cost of the new Enhanced Local Downe Hospital, which will open in Summer 2009, is £64 million.

People Suffering from Obesity

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people suffer from obesity. (AQW 1777/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Obesity levels in Northern Ireland are monitored through the Health and Social Wellbeing Survey and estimated using the Body Mass Index

(BMI), which is a widely used indicator of body fat levels calculated from a person's height and weight. The most recent survey completed was in 2005/06, and the results showed that 24% of adults (aged 16 and over) were obese.

In 2005/06, height and weight measurements were also sought from those aged 2 years or above in households participating in the survey. The calculation of BMI in children also depends on the age and sex of the child and there is some debate over the most appropriate way to use BMI to record childhood obesity rates in the UK. Using the UK National BMI percentiles approach, 18% of children aged 2-15 years were obese. However, there are some concerns that this method could overestimate obesity. An alternative approach which is gaining acceptance was put forward by the International Obesity Task Force. Using this approach, almost one in ten (8%) children were obese although there are some concerns that this method could underestimate obesity.

Retained Firefighters

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there was only one recruitment drive in five years for retained fire fighters in Portstewart. (AQW 1801/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Recruitment campaigns are planned regularly for retained (part time) personnel for all Station areas throughout Northern Ireland only where and when vacancies exist.

In addition to a recruitment campaign in August 2005 for retained firefighters for Portstewart, there had been a campaign that completed in June 2002, one that completed in October 2003 and there is a current retained firefighter campaign (October 2008) for Portstewart that has not yet been completed.

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

(I) DENTISTS' REGISTERED TO PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICE DENTAL TREATMENT IN THE LARNE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA².

Initials	Surname	Address	Postcode	District Council
J	Blair3	1 Marine Road, Carnlough	BT44 0HE	Larne
		9/11 Glenarm Road, Larne	BT40 1BN	Larne
J	Christie	14 Victoria Road, Larne	BT40 1RN	Larne
P J	Donnelly3	1 Marine Road, Carnlough	BT44 0HE	Larne
		9/11 Glenarm Road, Larne	BT40 1BN	Larne
F	Lynch	137 Old Glenarm Road, Larne	BT40 1NH	Larne

Removal of Fire Appliance

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which Census Output Areas were used in the preparation of the consultation document regarding the removal of Portstewart's second fire appliance. (AQW 1802/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Census Output Areas used to prepare the Portstewart consultation document were supplied by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Analysis of risk within Portstewart was carried out with reference to those Output Areas whose geographical centre points fall within the Portstewart Fire Station Area boundary.

Removal of Fire Appliance

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the full data information factors used in the GIS modelling system in the preparation of the consultation document regarding the removal of Portstewart's second fire appliance. (AQW 1803/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Data used within the Geographical Information System (GIS) in relation to the Portstewart Consultation Document includes map data supplied by Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI), demographic data supplied by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and historical incident data held internally by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

Health Service Dentists

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list all the Health Service dentists in (i) Larne; (ii) Carrickfergus; and (iii) Newtownabbey. (AQW 1809/09)

Initials	Surname	Address	Postcode	District Council
W M R	Mcfaul	11 Victoria Road, Larne	BT40 1RT	Larne
A	McGahan	14 Victoria Road, Larne	BT40 1RN	Larne
R	McGarel	11 Victoria Road, Larne	BT40 1RT	Larne
I	Morrison	11 Thorndale Avenue, Larne	BT40 1QX	Larne
T	O'boyle	14 Victoria Road, Larne	BT40 1RN	Larne

Source: Central Services Agency

(II) DENTISTS¹ REGISTERED TO PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICE DENTAL TREATMENT IN THE CARRICKFERGUS DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA².

Initials	Surname	Address	Postcode	District Council
L	Abbott	50 Station Road, Greenisland	BT38 8TP	Carrickfergus
D	Athimoolam	2 Market Place, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AW	Carrickfergus
J	Blair ³	19 St Brides Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 8AF	Carrickfergus
T	Buchanan	19 St Brides Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 8AF	Carrickfergus
B	Campomanes De Allende	2 Market Place, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AW	Carrickfergus
M	Clements	22 West Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AR	Carrickfergus
H A	Gardner	14 Marine Parade, Whitehead	BT38 9QP	Carrickfergus
W R	Hanna	51 Victoria Road, Carrickfergus	BT38 7JJ	Carrickfergus
W N	Harper	22 North Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AQ	Carrickfergus
A	Law	22 West Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AR	Carrickfergus
A H	McClure	14 Marine Parade, Whitehead	BT38 9QP	Carrickfergus
C E	McVeigh	14 Balmoral Avenue, Whitehead	BT38 9QD	Carrickfergus
J C	McVeigh	50 Station Road, Greenisland	BT38 8TP	Carrickfergus
N	O'kane	22 West Street, Carrickfergus	BT38 7AR	Carrickfergus
L	Russell	50 Station Road, Greenisland	BT38 8TP	Carrickfergus
R M R	Thompson	51 Victoria Road, Carrickfergus	BT38 7JJ	Carrickfergus

Source: Central Services Agency

(III) DENTISTS¹ REGISTERED TO PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICE DENTAL TREATMENT IN THE NEWTOWNABBEY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA².

Initials	Surname	Address	Postcode	District Council
B C	Alton	105 Monkstown Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey	BT37 0LG	Newtownabbey
L M	Armstrong	20 Portland Avenue, Glengormley	BT36 5EY	Newtownabbey
A C	Beresford	22 Doagh Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9BG	Newtownabbey
S	Best	105 Monkstown Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey	BT37 0LG	Newtownabbey
C	Bloomer	138 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9QR	Newtownabbey
P	Burns	105 Monkstown Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey	BT37 0LG	Newtownabbey
J	Costelloe	138 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9QR	Newtownabbey
H	Douglas	30 Rashee Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9HJ	Newtownabbey
S C	Doyle	5 Hightown Road, Glengormley	BT36 7TZ	Newtownabbey

Initials	Surname	Address	Postcode	District Council
B S	Ferris	138 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9QR	Newtownabbey
K	Gordon	105 Monkstown Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey	BT37 0LG	Newtownabbey
E	Gordon	22 Hightown Road, Glengormley	BT36 7UA	Newtownabbey
M A	Irwin	5 Hightown Road, Glengormley	BT36 7TZ	Newtownabbey
M B	Kirk	105 Monkstown Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey	BT37 0LG	Newtownabbey
Z	Kviklyte	53/55 Main Street, Ballyclare	BT39 9AA	Newtownabbey
A	Lalor	604 Shore Road, Whiteabbey	BT37 0SN	Newtownabbey
P	Lowe	30 Rashee Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9HJ	Newtownabbey
T	Martin	604 Shore Road, Whiteabbey	BT37 0SN	Newtownabbey
F J	Mccann	53/55 Main Street, Ballyclare	BT39 9AA	Newtownabbey
J	Mcclinton	106 Ballyclare Road, Newtownabbey	BT36 5HN	Newtownabbey
G J	Mccloskey	604 Shore Road, Whiteabbey	BT37 0SN	Newtownabbey
M	McKeever	106 Ballyclare Road, Newtownabbey	BT36 5HN	Newtownabbey
J S	Mckissick	30 Rashee Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9HJ	Newtownabbey
T	Mckissick	30 Rashee Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9HJ	Newtownabbey
F	McLean	2 Portland Avenue, Glengormley	BT36 5EY	Newtownabbey
D	McNally	604 Shore Road, Whiteabbey	BT37 0SN	Newtownabbey
D A R	Mellor	292 Shore Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9RW	Newtownabbey
M C	Mellor	292 Shore Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9RW	Newtownabbey
J	Moore	292 Shore Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9RW	Newtownabbey
I	Thompson	138 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	BT37 9QR	Newtownabbey
M	Tosh	22 Doagh Road, Ballyclare	BT39 9BG	Newtownabbey
P	Tumelty	22 Hightown Road, Glengormley	BT36 7UA	Newtownabbey
B W	Turner	2 Portland Avenue, Glengormley	BT36 5EY	Newtownabbey

Source: Central Services Agency

Notes:

1. Figures include Principal dentists only - excludes assistants and Vocational Dental Practitioners.
2. Statistics are at 22nd October 2008 and are based on the location of the dental surgery where the dentist is employed.
3. P J Donnelly and J Blair each work in two different surgeries within Larne District Council Area. J Blair also works in a third surgery in Carrickfergus District Council Area. Individual dentists may also work in surgeries located in District Council Areas other than the three listed above.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the efforts being made to provide services for people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. (AQW 1829/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: People suffering from myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue (ME/CFS) syndrome in Northern Ireland have access to treatment from appropriate sections of the health service depending on the severity of their illness. The variability of symptoms in patients means that individual patients may need to access different disciplines of the health service. These may include GP care, community care

and support, neurology services and mental health services which can provide treatment like cognitive behaviour therapy, which is thought to help manage the illness.

A specialist ME/CFS clinic for the treatment of adults with mild to moderate symptoms is delivered at Belfast City Hospital by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current

research initiatives into Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.
(AQW 1830/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department does not currently fund any research into Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME). Research in diseases like ME needs to be undertaken in specialised Centres of Excellence and co-ordinated at the national level.

Central Services Agency

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what investigations into George Brangam were conducted by the Central Services Agency during his time as its Director.
(AQW 1835/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that there were two investigations conducted by the Central Services Agency into George Brangam during his time as Director/ Chief Legal Advisor.

The first investigation was conducted in 1987 following a query raised by a barrister employed by the Agency, regarding the non-receipt of payment for legal services. The investigation confirmed that payment had in fact been received and the Agency did not pursue the matter further.

The second investigation was conducted in November 1994 following complaints about the management style of George Brangam and another officer. The investigation made a number of recommendations which were implemented or under further consideration when Mr Brangam left the Agency in March 1995.

Obesity Related Disorders

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people undergoing surgery for obesity related disorders, in the last three years; and (ii) what future action he will take to address this. (AQW 1840/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of people undergoing surgery for obesity related disorders is not collected centrally.

At present, there is no recurrent funding for bariatric (weight loss) surgery in Northern Ireland. Health and Social Services Boards do not routinely commission bariatric surgery although they may consider applications for funding where exceptional clinical circumstances are presented.

Work is currently being taken forward to consider the possibility of providing such a service in Northern Ireland, including appropriate pre and post operative care and ongoing dietary support. This is currently being considered by the Health and Social Services Boards through the Regional Medical Services Group in the context of the assessed need for this service and other competing health and social care priorities.

Central Services Agency

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail what payments were made by the Central Services Agency to relatives of George Brangam, during his time as its Director.
(AQW 1841/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Central Services Agency holds no details of payments made prior to March 1995, when George Brangam left the Agency.

Clostridium Difficile

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people acquired clostridium difficile in each of the last 5 years, broken down by hospital; and how many people died as a result.
(AQW 1844/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Figures for the number of patient episodes of Clostridium difficile are not available prior January 2005.

Figures for 2005 and 2006 are not available in the format requested.

Figures for 2007 are provided in the table below:

CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE EPISODES AND DEATHS, BY HOSPITAL, 2007

	No. of Episodes	No. of Deaths*
Belfast Trust	2007	2007 ^p
Royal Victoria Hospital	89	3
Belfast City Hospital	107	5
Green Park	11	
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	45	
Musgrave Park Hospital		
Cancer Centre	13	
Total	265	8
Northern Trust		
Antrim Area Hospital	149	8

	No. of Episodes	No. of Deaths*
Causeway Hospital	38	3
Dalriada Hospital	2	
Mid Ulster Hospital	27	
Moyle Hospital	0	1
Robinson Memorial	1	
Whiteabbey hospital	30	1
Total	247	13
South Eastern Trust		
Ards Hospital		
Bangor Hospital		
Down Hospital	19	
Lagan Valley Hospital	13	1
Ulster Hospital	187	2
Total	219	3
Southern Trust		
Craigavon Area Hospital	79	2
Daisy Hill Hospital	8	1
Lurgan Hospital	24	
Mullinure	4	
South Tyrone Hospital	1	
St Lukes		
Total	116	3

Western Trust	2007	2007^p
Altnagelvin Area Hospital	97	2
Erne Hospital (Sperrin Lakeland)	11	1
Tyrone County Hospital	27	
Waterside Hospital (ward 5)	0	
Total	135	3
Other		
All other places		4

Sources: CDSC for numbers of episodes; NISRA for numbers of deaths
No. of Deaths* is deaths for which C.difficile is recorded as the underlying cause.

^p Data for 2007 remain provisional until the publication of the 2007 Annual Report of the Registrar General due to be released November 2008

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to make a statement on the progress of the New Strategy Direction document

on drug and alcohol abuse; and to detail (i) the input from other Departments; and (ii) the involvement of Assembly Members. (AQW 1845/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The implementation of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD) began in October 2006, and its overall aim is to reduce the level of Alcohol and Drug related harm in Northern Ireland.

Progress to date includes:

- Approximately £6.5 million has been allocated to the implementation of the NSD in 08/09;
- regional alcohol and drug public information campaigns are being taken forward (with a particular emphasise on binge drinking), and these are supported at the local level;
- counselling and mentoring services for young people available across Northern Ireland;
- local education and prevention initiatives addressing those deemed particularly vulnerable to alcohol and drug problem use – e.g. homeless;
- work is also being taken forward regionally on developing action plans to tackle, Young People's Drinking, and "Hidden Harm"; and
- the four local Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams (DACTs) are implementing their Local Action Plans, which have a particular focus on providing support for community based activities – these action plans have been revised during the course of this year.

- The NSD is a cross-Departmental Strategy, therefore a number of key Departments are represented on the NSD Steering Group. This includes the Northern Ireland Office, the Department for Social Development, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, and the Department of Employment and Learning. All these Departments continue to play key role to play in ensuring we meet the long-term outcomes contained in the NSD.
- During the consultation process for the NSD, the Strategy was issued to a range of key stakeholders, including Assembly members, for their comments and input. There is currently no representation from Assembly Members on the NSD Steering Group, and we are not aware of any representation on the local DACT groups.

Hoax Calls to Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hoax calls were

received by the Fire and Rescue Service in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 1858/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is given in the following table:

2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
153	126	145	81	67

The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service publishes a range of statistics, including mobilisation in response to hoax calls, on its website (www.nifrs.org).

Transplant Waiting Lists

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the heart transplant list.
(AQW 1867/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In October 2008 there was 1 Northern Ireland resident on the UK Transplant waiting list for hearts; there were 300 waiting for kidneys ; and 6 were waiting for livers.

Transplant Waiting Lists

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the kidney transplant list.
(AQW 1868/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In October 2008 there was 1 Northern Ireland resident on the UK Transplant waiting list for hearts; there were 300 waiting for kidneys ; and 6 were waiting for livers.

Transplant Waiting Lists

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the liver transplant list.
(AQW 1869/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In October 2008 there was 1 Northern Ireland resident on the UK Transplant waiting list for hearts; there were 300 waiting for kidneys ; and 6 were waiting for livers.

Persons Registered Blind

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many persons are registered blind.
(AQW 1897/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the form requested.

Home Help

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to confirm how many homes are currently receiving home help assistance in the (i) Carrickfergus; and (ii) Larne, areas.
(AQW 1920/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the form requested.

Paediatric Neuromuscular Specialise Clinics

Mrs Long asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there are no longer any paediatric neuromuscular specialise clinics in Northern Ireland.
(AQW 1923/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is responsible for a range of specialised paediatric neurology and neurodisability services, including a multidisciplinary neuromuscular clinic, provided at Belfast City Hospital.

Staffing pressures within the Trust have affected the availability of consultant paediatric neurologists and subsequently the ability to sustain the neuromuscular clinic. Regular clinics have not been held since beginning of September 2008.

Recruitment of an additional paediatric neurologist is underway and interviews are scheduled for 1st December 2008. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will take up post by 1st April 2009.

In the short term, the Trust is currently working to develop interim arrangements to ensure that children who would normally attend the neuromuscular clinic have their needs appropriately met.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been born with sexually transmitted infections passed on by their mother, in each of the last 5 years.
(AQW 1930/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of children born with sexually transmitted infections passed on by their mother, in each of the last 5 years is unavailable.

Lagan Valley Hospital

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of how the review of maternity services will impact on maternity provision at Lagan Valley Hospital.
(AQW 1946/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have asked the Eastern Health and Social Services Board to undertake a review of existing maternity capacity in the greater Belfast area. The Board has been asked to work with the Belfast and South Eastern Trusts to identify how inpatient obstetric services should be developed and configured and to detail how consultant-led services will be appropriately supported by specialist paediatric services. The Eastern Board has also been asked to consider the potential for a midwife-led maternity service for the Lisburn area.

The Board will report its findings to my Department early in the New Year.

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's strategy for dealing with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.
(AQW 1980/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Services for attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder are provided by each individual Health and Social Care Board and Trust based on the needs of the populations they serve.

Powers of Attorney

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to replace enduring powers of attorney with lasting powers of attorney; and what consideration he will give to the problems that occurred in England and Wales when lasting powers of attorney was implemented.
(AQW 2009/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Following recommendations contained in the Bamford Review, my Department plans to issue in the near future a consultation document on a legislative framework for taking forward new mental capacity and mental health legislation in Northern Ireland. The framework will contain proposals in relation to powers of attorney.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Northern Ireland Water

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development how many final notice demands were issued by Northern Ireland Water this year, despite original bills not having been issued to these customers.
(AQW 1515/09)

The Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that, since 1 April 2008, three final notices were issued in error to non-domestic customers who had not received an initial bill.

Strabane Bus Station

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to (i) revise the opening hours of Strabane Bus Station to provide a service for passengers on Saturdays and Sundays; and (ii) install additional lighting in the vicinity of the station.
(AQW 1583/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: This is an operational matter for Translink. It has advised me that it has no plans to revise the opening hours for Strabane Bus Station or install additional lighting in the vicinity of the station.

Pedestrian Crossing

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development if a pedestrian crossing between the West Winds estate and the Jubilee Road will be constructed on the Newtownards Southern Distributor Road.
(AQW 1709/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the work on the A20 Newtownards Southern Distributor Road will include the provision of a Toucan Crossing. This will be located adjacent to Blenheim Drive and Dakota Avenue, in the West Winds Estate, providing a safe crossing facility for residents. The work will also include a link to a footway which leads on to Jubilee Road.

Car Parks

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total value of the National Car Parks contract; (ii) the total revenue generated since the introduction of the Traffic Attendant system; (iii) the total number of parking meters that have been inoperable since the system's

introduction; and (iv) the average repair time for parking meters. (AQW 1728/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that:

- (i) Since the parking enforcement contract commenced at the end of October 2006, £14.6m has been paid to NCP Services Ltd (NCP) for enforcement services provided, up to the end of August 2008.
- (ii) Roads Service has received £7.75m from payment of Penalty Charge Notices up to the end of September 2008.
- (iii) Since the commencement of the contract with NCP, a total of 354 Pay and Display machines have been inoperable at some stage.
- (iv) NCP is responsible for managing Pay and Display machine faults, including their repair. Performance in this area is measured monthly against a specific contractual key performance indicator (KPI). However, this KPI is not measured by average repair times; instead, it is measured against set response times to reported faults. The stipulated response times for on-street Pay and Display machines in Belfast is 3 hours and for all other Pay and Display machines, it is 24 hours. To meet the required standard, NCP must respond to 98% of reported faults within the above timescales. NCP has failed to meet this KPI on four occasions and in accordance with the contract, performance payments were reduced on each occasion.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the identification of a speeding problem in a specific geographical area, to detail the process followed, including timeframes, for traffic calming measures to be introduced. (AQW 1736/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service uses established criteria to determine and prioritise locations for the provision of traffic calming measures.

The assessment procedure takes into consideration various factors to prioritise the many requests received. These include personal injury statistics, the volume and speed of vehicles using the road, environmental factors, such as the presence of schools, playgrounds, hospitals, clinics, shops and public buildings, and whether or not the road in question is used as a through route.

As the demand for road safety measures exceeds Roads Service's capacity to deliver such schemes, the

predetermined criteria enables a priority list of traffic calming schemes to be established.

Establishing priority lists helps ensure that:

- limited resources are directed to the areas of greatest need;
- value for money is obtained;
- no discrimination is made between Councils, council areas, towns, different areas within towns, etc;
- equality issues are managed; and
- the ultimate dependant factor for schemes is available funding.

When a scheme is proposed, all frontagers directly affected by the proposals are consulted by letter and/or leaflet with an accompanying map outlining the proposed scheme. For larger, complex, or more controversial schemes, it may be more appropriate to meet with local residents groups and/or hold public exhibitions in the affected area.

Statutory notices of intention to proceed with schemes are placed in the local press and at appropriate points on the road, as required by Article 65 of The Roads (NI) Order 1993. If objections are received to the outlined proposals for a traffic calming scheme on a particular road, Roads Service may not be able to proceed with the scheme's implementation.

There are no specific timeframes for completing the procedure for the introduction of a traffic calming scheme.

Construction Companies

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of enforcement measures that have been implemented by the Roads Service against construction companies who have not completed roads to adoption standards, in the last 5 years. (AQW 1746/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that they have implemented enforcement measures on some 125 occasions, during the last five years, where the construction company has not completed roads to adoption standards.

Sectarian Emblems

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail what action his Department has taken in the last 7 months, where sectarian emblems have remained on lamp standards at Friary Road,

on the main thoroughfare from Armagh to Caledon.
(AQW 1755/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service's policy in relation to flags and emblems on its equipment remains unchanged from my reply to you on 8 April 2008 (AQW 5193/08).

Roads Service is a signatory to the Multi Agency Protocol which indicates that the Police Service for Northern Ireland will take the lead where the display of flags or emblems is causing tension, or is having a detrimental affect on the quality of life in a community.

The PSNI would therefore be the appropriate lead agency to contact in the case of Friary Road.

Road Calming Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the road calming schemes to be introduced to the North Down constituency, over the next 3 years.
(AQW 1763/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service receives many requests for traffic calming schemes and, as demand greatly exceeds the capacity to supply these measures, all proposals are required to be assessed, scored and prioritised within each Council area. Works programmes are then drawn up on an annual basis and are published each year in the Autumn Roads Service Report to Councils. This programme may be subject to change, depending on the assessed priority of new requests for traffic calming.

In relation to 2008/09 financial year, I can advise that Roads Service proposes to provide the following traffic calming schemes in the North Down Parliamentary constituency:-

- Seahill Road, Holywood;
- Ballymacconnell Road South, Bangor;
- Castle Park Road, Bangor;
- Drumhirk Drive, Bangor;
- Gray's Hill area, Bangor;
- Skipperstone Road/Whitehill area, Bangor;
- Abbey Road, Millisle, and
- Moss Road, Millisle.

These schemes are subject to the successful conclusion of the public consultation and legislative processes.

The locations and the current priority ranking for all the applications being assessed by Roads Service, within the North Down Parliamentary Constituency area, are provided in the table below:

ASSESSMENTS FOR TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES IN ROADS SERVICE

Current Priority Ranking	Location	Council Area
3	Groomsport Road, Bangor	North Down
4	Bryansburn Road, Bangor	North Down
5	Old Belfast Road, Bangor	North Down
6	Church View / Spencer Street, Holywood	North Down
7	Brunswick Road, Bangor	North Down
8	Croft Road, Holywood	North Down
9	Central Avenue, Bangor	North Down
18	Willowbrook Park / Road, Bangor	North Down
28	Church Road, Holywood	North Down
29	Sunningdale Park, Bangor	North Down
35	Abbey Ring, Holywood	North Down
48	Shandon Drive, Bangor	North Down
54	Ballyree Drive, Bangor	North Down
55	Loverock Way, Bangor	North Down
65	Innisfayle Drive, Bangor	North Down
66	Thornleigh Gardens, Bangor	North Down
68	Chippendale Avenue, Bangor	North Down
91	Ballyree, Bangor	North Down
97	Princess Gardens, Holywood	North Down
102	Godfrey Avenue, Bangor	North Down
120	Wandsworth Road, Bangor	North Down
133	Farnham Road, Bangor	North Down
145	Marquis Avenue, Bangor	North Down
149	Sandringham Drive, Bangor	North Down
150	Victoria Road, Bangor	North Down
154	Meadowvale, Bangor	North Down
156	Old Quay Road, Holywood	North Down
182	Towerview Crescent, Bangor	North Down
183	Dixon Road / Rossdale Road, Bangor	North Down
200	Churchill Park / Crescent, Bangor	North Down
204	Ruby Street, Bangor	North Down
213	Sherwood Parks, Bangor	North Down
225	Tower Road, Conlig	North Down
229	Coronation Avenue, Conlig	North Down

As further assessments are completed, priorities and plans may change. Therefore, the inclusion

of schemes in future works programmes, at these locations, cannot be guaranteed.

Road Resurfacing Work

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development for a timescale for resurfacing work to be completed on the road between Ballywalter and Ballyhalbert; and what date the road was last inspected by Roads Service. (AQW 1773/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is committed to carrying out further improvements on the road between Ballywalter and Ballyhalbert by completing resurfacing work, the first stage of which is already in place. Unfortunately, there is limited funding for resurfacing work and many schemes are competing for the resources available. Consequently, I am unable to provide you with a definite timescale for when resurfacing on this stretch of road will be completed.

I can confirm that this road is subject to a cyclic inspection regime which identifies defects for repair. The most recent inspection was carried out on 13 October 2008.

Street Works

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail for each of the last five years (i) the total amount paid out in compensation to people who suffered personal injury as a result of street works; and (ii) the number and total amount of financial penalties against sub-contractors as a result of unsatisfactory street works. (AQW 1794/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department has not paid any compensation arising from personal injury sustained during street works. Public utilities and others who wish to undertake street works are responsible for dealing with any compensation claims that arise from their works.

Roads Service does not maintain details of financial penalties against utility sub-contractors, as a result of unsatisfactory street works.

New Park and Ride Facilities

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans for new park and ride facilities in the East Antrim constituency. (AQW 1806/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Planned or recent improvements to Park and Ride facilities

at railway stations in the East Antrim constituency include:

- an extension to the Park and Ride facility at Whitehead, to provide an additional 20 spaces from 29 September 2008, at a cost of £151,000;
- ongoing works at Greenisland to provide an extra 72 spaces by March 2009, at a cost of £424,000;
- work at Jordanstown, to provide 61 spaces, at a cost of £544,000, is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2009; and
- at Whiteabbey, work to provide 57 spaces, at a cost of £477,000, is scheduled to be completed during 2009.

There are also plans, at Feasibility Stage, to provide additional spaces at Carrickfergus Station. The indicative date for completing this work is 2012, assuming the Department approves the project and the necessary funding is available.

Also in Carrickfergus, my Department's Roads Service proposes to provide an additional 236 park and ride spaces for rail users, by the conversion of its existing car park at St Brides. This will form part of the temporary traffic management measures during the road improvement scheme at the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland.

Roads Service is also aware of an increasing demand for a new facility in the Millbrook area of Larne, evidenced by increasing numbers of vehicles being parked in the vicinity of the Millbrook Roundabout. Drivers may be using public transport or sharing lifts from this point. Further investigation will be carried into the feasibility of providing a modest Park and Ride or Park and Share car park at this location. A project will only progress when the level of demand has been determined and the availability of suitable land at this location has been ascertained.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the adjustments that Northern Ireland Water has had to make to its financial accounts; and (ii) the implications of these adjustments. (AQW 1836/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that its financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008 have been signed, audited and published therefore any potential impact of over/undercharging of customers will be reflected in the financial accounts for the year ending 31 March 2009.

When the accounts are being prepared, consideration will be given to the value of bills which

may have been over/undercharged to reflect their recoverability and any subsequent adjustments.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of bills sent out by Northern Ireland Water that contained errors, over the last two years. (AQW 1839/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that they have identified 2,331 inaccurate bills that were issued in the past two years. This represents 0.7% of the total number of bills sent. All the errors were rectified promptly.

Owing to a specific billing issue relating to incorrect standing charge tariffs, incorrect bills were issued to some 8,200 customers. Northern Ireland Water appeared before the Regional Development Committee to explain how the error occurred and is presently in consultation with the Consumer Council and the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation to ensure the matter is resolved fairly and equitably.

Cross-Border Rail Link

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he and his Department have had with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland in relation to a cross-border rail link between (i) Derry/Londonderry and Donegal; and (ii) the North West and Dublin. (AQW 1846/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My contacts to date with my counterpart in the South of Ireland regarding cross border rail links have been through the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC). At the last NSMC meeting in May 2008, I invited the Council to note:

- the commitment of my Department to improve the railway line from Belfast to Derry;
- that my Department has agreed to undertake a study to consider the long-term social, physical and economic redevelopment of the railway throughout the North/West;
- that once the study is complete its findings will be brought to a meeting of NSMC in Transport Sectoral format and at that stage consideration may be given to a study into improved public transport links with Donegal.

At the same meeting, the NSMC received a joint presentation from NIR and Ianrod Eireann setting out an initial consideration of short and medium term options for improving frequency on the Belfast to Dublin service.

The two rail companies were asked by Ministers to expand upon the work undertaken to date and to prepare a business case. The joint proposal is due to be discussed at the next NSMC meeting scheduled for November 2008.

Proposed Bridges Scheme

Mr McCallister asked the Minister for Regional Development what (i) the current position is of Monaghan County Council's proposed Annaghroe and Knockaginny Blackwater bridges schemes; (ii) cost benefit analyses have now been undertaken; (iii) plans he has for access roads from Northern Ireland; (iv) environmental impact assessments he has carried out; and (v) consultations he has had about this with the Police Service of Northern Ireland and Garda Síochána. (AQW 1852/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the initial design work on the reinstatement of the Annaghroe and Knockaginny bridges has been completed. Planning applications are currently being considered by Monaghan County Council and the Department of the Environment's Planning Service.

As indicated in the response to the Member's previous Assembly Question AQW 5670/08, all the bridge reinstatement costs will be paid by the Irish Government. Therefore, a cost benefit analysis is not required to be undertaken by my Department.

The widths of the running surface on the Annaghroe Road and Knockaginny Road are approximately 5m and 3.5m respectively. These widths will be increased over short distances on the approaches to the bridges to 6m over Annaghroe Bridge and 5.5m over Knockaginny Bridge. Following requests from local landowners it is also proposed to provide passing bays on the Knockaginny Road.

Consultations between the bridge designers and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are on going and an Environmental Assessment regarding the proposals has been submitted. As part of the planning process, Planning Service will also undertake consultations with the NIEA.

Roads Service has had no consultations with the PSNI or Garda Síochána on the reinstatement of the bridges.

Traffic Flows

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average daily traffic flows for the A2 Bangor to Belfast road. (AQW 1860/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are four automatic traffic counting sites located on the A2 between Bangor and Belfast. The table below details the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for these four locations.

Census Point Number	Location	AADT	Year of Census	Comments
209	Sydenham By-Pass at City Airport	61931	2007	
501	Hollywood By-Pass	47793	2007	
502	Cultra	41375	2007	
505	Springhill	26526	2007	5 months data only

Automated Announcements on NIR Trains

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has plans to remove the gender specific automated announcements on NIR trains, on which the conductor is referred to as 'he'.

(AQW 1861/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Tanslink are bound by relevant equality legislation and have informed me that this issue has not previously been raised with them. Translink also indicated that there is a limited amount of time in which to make such announcements and that they currently follow normal terminology when relaying such passenger information. However, they will look at the practicalities of this suggestion the next time they are due to record new announcements.

Traffic Volume

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide the latest available daily traffic volume figures for the Jubilee Road in Newtownards.

(AQW 1862/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approx 300 automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the North's road network. I can advise the member that none of the automatic traffic counting sites are currently situated on the Jubilee Road, Newtownards. Therefore, it is not possible to provide the current average daily traffic flows for this road.

Executive Meetings

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what departmental business is being held up by the failure of the Executive to meet.

(AQW 1865/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: It is not my practice to disclose details of Executive business. The content of Executive papers, including draft papers, is confidential.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development if site meetings will still be available for elected representatives should the Northern Ireland Water office at Conlig close.

(AQW 1877/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that after the closure of the office in Conlig, site meetings will now be available at NIW's Head Office at Northland House in Belfast or other offices across the North. Officials will also be available to meet at other locations if required.

Commuter Parking

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact on residents in areas outside Belfast caused by all-day commuter parkers.

(AQW 1880/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I am aware that the problems created by all-day commuter parking are not restricted to those particular areas of Belfast, named in my announcement of 21 October. My Department's Roads Service is also considering requests for Residents Parking Schemes from a number of other locations across the North, which includes areas of Derry.

Commuter Parking

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration was given to including areas of Derry/Londonderry that are affected by all-day commuter parking in the free Residents Car Parking Scheme announced on 21 October 2008.

(AQW 1881/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I am aware that the problems created by all-day commuter parking are not restricted to those particular areas of Belfast, named in my announcement of 21 October. My Department's Roads Service is also considering

requests for Residents Parking Schemes from a number of other locations across the North, which includes areas of Derry.

Commuter Parking

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to outline the process of evaluation which determined the five areas most heavily affected by commuter parking; (ii) to detail the criteria applied in that evaluation; and (iii) what areas were measured in the exercise. (AQW 1882/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan published in 2004 addressed the issue of car parking and demand management within the Greater Belfast area and includes details of a number of measures to be introduced in the City Centre Core Zone and City Centre Fringe Zone. Residents' Parking Schemes, to limit the availability of all-day commuter parking places, is identified as one such measure to be introduced in these zones.

The initial effort has been concentrated in those areas within the Belfast City Centre Core Zone where the problems experienced by residents are considered to be the most acute. The five schemes being progressed are Barrack Street, Brown's Square, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row and The Markets (west of Cromac Street). These were selected in the mid/late 1990s on the basis of representations from public representatives and community groups indicating significant local support, which is considered essential for the successful introduction of such schemes.

Residents Parking Schemes

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) when the monitoring and assessment period for the free Residents Car Parking Scheme announced on 21 October 2008 will be completed; and (ii) when the findings of that exercise will be made known. (AQW 1883/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Whilst I have amended the policy to make the residents permits free, it should be noted that before a scheme can be implemented, a Traffic Regulation Order has to be made which is advertised to allow for representations. This process can take up to 12 months.

Roads Service will assess the effectiveness of these Residents Parking Schemes when the new parking arrangements have had a chance to bed in. This will give sufficient time for residents groups and local businesses within the areas to form an opinion on the operation of the schemes. The assessment will also

include parking surveys which will determine the level of illegal parking and availability of parking spaces.

Residents Parking Schemes

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development if an equality impact assessment was carried out on the introduction of the free Residents Car Parking Scheme that is limited to five areas in Belfast, as announced on 21 October 2008. (AQW 1885/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's policy for the introduction of Residents, Parking Schemes was published in January 2008 following a full public consultation. Part of the policy development process included the completion of a screening analysis to determine if a full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out. This screening analysis indicated that the introduction of the policy would not have any differential impact on any of the Section 75 groups, therefore the policy was screened out.

The screening analysis also attracted no comments when it was included in the public consultation document.

The change to the original policy, which I announced on 21 October 2008, simply removed the proposed charge for residents' permits. This applies to the policy as a whole and not just to schemes in Belfast. There are, therefore, no equality impact implications.

Monitoring Reports

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to the answer to AQW 286/09, to detail (i) the locations for which monitoring reports were produced for each year between April 1999 and April 2003; (ii) the locations where monitoring reports will be produced for the period April 2003 and April 2008; and (iii) the methodology used to monitor the effectiveness of respective forms of traffic calming. (AQW 1892/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The tables below detail the locations, broken down by division, for which my Department's Roads Service produced monitoring reports, relating to traffic calming schemes, in each financial year from April 1999 to March 2003.

FINANCIAL YEAR 1999/2000

Northern Division	
Creggan, Derry (Phase 1)	Laurelhill Road, Coleraine
Rosville Street/Lecky Road, Derry	Windyhill Estate, Coleraine

Steeple Road/Old Steeple Road Oriel Road, Antrim	Portglenone Road, Randalstown
Castlecatt Road, Bushmills	Old Strabane Road, Derry
Southern Division	
Windmill Road, Armagh	Lawrencetown
Redmonville, Portadown	Hilltown
Park Road, Portadown	Armagh Road, Newry
Aghacommon Village	Newcastle Road, Castlewellan
Folly Lane, Armagh	Killough Road, Downpatrick
Eastern Division	
Alexandra Park Avenue, Belfast	Anahilt, Lisburn
Ballybeen, Dundonald (Phase 1)	Pembroke Loop, Lisburn
Belvoir Drive, Castlereagh	Glenbawn Avenue, Lisburn
Donegall Park Avenue, Belfast	Summerhill Road, Lisburn
Mallusk Road, Newtownabbey	Donaghadee Road, Bangor
Island Street, Belfast	Owenroe Drive, Bangor
Tennant Street Area, Belfast	
Western Division	
Aughnacloy, Co. Tyrone	Kesh, Co. Fermanagh
Ballycolman Road/Ballymount Avenue, Strabane	

FINANCIAL YEAR 2000/01

Northern Division	
Ann Street, Ballycastle	Rosemount Avenue & Gardens, Derry
Ballybogey, Ballymoney	Carnhill, Derry
Burnfoot Village	Westway, Derry
Dungiven	Wakehurst Area, Harryville
Feeny Village	
Southern Division	
A2 Millisle	A20 Main Street, Kircubbin
Blackwatertown Village, Co Armagh	Vianstown Road, Downpatrick
Coolmillish Road, Markethill	Castlewellan Road, Clough
Silverwood Drive, Lurgan	
Eastern Division	
Ardoyne Avenue, Belfast	Turf Lodge (Monagh Road), Belfast
Bloomfield Road, Bangor	Twaddell Avenue, Belfast
Elmfield Road, Belfast	Windermere Road, Carrickfergus
Gardenmore Road, Twinbrook	Newtown Park, Belfast
Longlands Road, Belfast	Edenmore Drive Area, Belfast

Summerhill Drive, Twinbrook	Ballybeen, Dundonald (Phase 2)
Western Division	
A4 Gateways - Fivemiltown & Aughur	Strathroy Estate, Omagh
Dungannon Road, Moy	

FINANCIAL YEAR 2001/02

Northern Division	
Lisnablagh Road/Tullyarton Road, Coleraine	Racecourse Road (Ballyarnett), Derry
Crebilly Road, Ballymena	Glen Road, Derry
Mountsandal Road, Coleraine	Glebeside, Ballymoney
Kells/Connor	Armoy Village
Strathfoyle, Derry	Tobar Park/Kilmakevitt, Cullybackey
Edenmore Road, Limavady	Ballymoney Village
Rosstowney Road, Derry	Dowland Road, Limavady
Southern Division	
Knockcree Avenue, Kilkeel	Aghagallon Village
Rooney Road, Kilkeel	Killicommaine, Portadown
Saul Road, Downpatrick	Victoria Street, Lurgan
Castlewellan Road, Newcastle	Obins Street, Portadown
Elmwood/Beechmount Parks, Newry	Newfodge Road, Magheralin
Mullacreevie Estate	Drumaness Village
Eastern Division	
Suffolk Road, Belfast	Lisburn Gateways - Glenavy
Lenadoon, Belfast (Area 2)	Bryansburn Road, Bangor
Joanmount Area, Belfast	Oldpark Avenue, Belfast
Ballysillan Park, Belfast	Ashgrove Road, Glengormley
Ballysillan Area, Belfast	Braniel Square, Castlereagh
Jamaica Street/Road, Belfast	Braniel Square, Castlereagh (Phase 2)
Atlantic Avenue, Belfast	St. James Road Area, Belfast
Beechfield Street/ Mountpottinger Link, Belfast	Glenbane Avenue, Rathcoole, Newtownabbey
Ballynafeigh, Belfast	Clonduff Drive Area, Castlereagh
Summerhill Road, Twinbrook	
Western Division	
Lisnagull Estate, Dungannon	Derrygonnelly Village
Glebe, Sion Mills	A29, Swatragh & Tobermore Villages
Carlton Drive, Strabane	

FINANCIAL YEAR 2002/03

Northern Division	
Ballycraig Road/Linn Road/ Killyglen Road, Larne	Circular Road/Iniscarn Road/ Lislane Drive, Derry
Ballee Estate, Ballymena	Trench Road, Derry
Rasharkin and Dunloy	Beechwood Avenue, Derry
Newpark Estate, Antrim	Currynierin, Drumahoe
Ballysally	Drumleck Road, Derry
Southern Division	
Orangefield Estate, Armagh	West Winds Estate, Newtownards
Drumarg/Dalton Park Estates, Armagh	Darragh Road, Newtownards
Middletown Village	Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards
Gilford Village	Bangor Road, Newtownards
Brownstown East Estate, Portadown	Glenard Road, Newtownards
Flying Horse Road, Downpatrick	Meigh Village
Downpatrick Road, Ardglass	Barrack Street, Newry
Eastern Division	
Glandore Avenue, Belfast	Lisburn Gateways- Dromara
Lansdowne Road, Belfast	New Mossley, Newtownabbey
Bloomfield, Belfast	Rashee Road, Ballyclare
Rosebery Road, Belfast	Cregagh Estate, Belfast
Mountainhill Road, Belfast	Sunnylands, Carrickfergus
Old Warren Estate, Lisburn	Oakfield Drive, Carrickfergus
Tonagh Estate, Lisburn	Knockfergus Park, Greenisland
Lisburn Gateways- Maghaberry	Northlands, Belfast
Western Division	
Dromore Road, Omagh	Townsend Street, Strabane
Derry Road, Omagh	Coalisland
Beragh	Draperstown
Omagh Road, Carrickmore	Straw Village, Draperstown
Lisnafin Estate, Strabane	Kilmacormick 1 Estate, Enniskillen

The tables below detail the locations, broken down by division, for which my Department's Roads Service will produce monitoring reports, relating to traffic calming schemes, in each financial year from April 2003 to March 2007.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2003/04

Northern Division	
Lower Greystone Road, Antrim	Edenmore Road, Limavady
Glendun and Dunclog Areas, Ballymena	Nelson Drive Estate, Derry
Dervock Village	Lettershandoney
Demesne Estate, Ballymena	Glenbank/Glenside Road, Derry
Lough Road, Antrim	Fernabbey, Derry
Millburn, Coleraine	
Southern Division	
Ardglass Road/Ballyhornan Road, Downpatrick	Carnaget Road, Newry
Ballyduggan Road, Downpatrick	Brownlow Terrace, Lurgan
Dublin Road/Castlewellan Road, Kilcoo	Old Portadown Road, Lurgan
Shrigley Road, Killyleagh	Wood Lane, Lurgan
Bowtown Road/Greenwell Street, Newtownards	West Street, Portadown
Cloghy Road, Portaferry	Fitzgerald Park, Portadown
Ballygowan Road, Comber	Scarva Village, Banbridge
Movilla Road/Abbot Drive, Newtownards	Primrose Gardens, Banbridge
Drumalane/Fathom Line, Newry	Iveagh Drive, Banbridge
Church Street, Rostrevor	Hamiltonsbawn, Armagh
Belfast Road, Newry	New Line, Richill
Summerhill, Warrenpoint	Alexander Park, Armagh
Eastern Division	
Willowfield/Carlingford Street Area, Belfast	Springfield-Forfar, Belfast
Lower Ormeau, Belfast	Forthriver, Belfast
Willowholme Area, Belfast	Grays Lane, Belfast
Park Road/North-South Parade, Belfast	Fortwilliam Park, Belfast
Orchardville Area - Finaghy, Belfast	Serpentine Road, Belfast
Abbey Road-Ardcarn Area, Belfast	Brookvale-Cliftonville Area, Belfast
Aylesbury Road Area, Belfast	Conway/Canmore Area, Belfast
Deerpark Road, Belfast	Gilnahirk Road, Belfast
Ainsworth/Woodvale Area, Belfast	Lagmore, Lisburn
Clifton Park Avenue, Belfast	Bell Steel/Brian's Well Road, Dunmurry
Manor Street Area, Belfast	Fernagh Road Area, Newtownabbey

Beechmount Avenue, Belfast	Doagh Village
Western Division	
Meeting House Avenue, Maghera	Ratheen Drive, Cookstown
Bellaghy	Hospital Road, Omagh (Phase 1)
Castlederg	Altmore Drive, Dungannon

FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05

Northern Division	
Ballycraig Road, Antrim	Mosside
Toome Village	Cushendall
Ballymena Town Centre (Ballymoney Street)	Kilfennan Link Road, Derry
Armour Avenue, Ballymoney	Creggan Broadway and side streets, Derry
Moss, Galliagh, Fergleen and Bracken Parks, Derry	Heron Way, Lapwing Way, Emerson Street, Derry
Castleroe, Coleraine	Carnlough Village
Drumagarner, Kilrea	Brandywell Road and Lecky Road, Derry
Greysteel Village	
Southern Division	
Ashgrove, Newry	A29 Railway Street, Armagh
Greyabbey	Irish Street, Armagh
Cloughreagh Park Bessbrook	Umgola Road, Armagh
Moss Road, Ballygowan	Banbridge Road, Kinallen
Old Belfast Road, Downpatrick	Ballygowan Road, Banbridge
Lisbane	Lurgan Road, Dromore
High Bangor Road, Donaghadee	Banbridge Road, Dromore
Ballywhiskin	Francis Street, Lurgan
Brentwood Way, Newtownards	Old Portadown Road, Lurgan
Balloo	B2 Wolf Island Terrace, Derrymacash
Dromore Road, Ballynahinch	Charles Street, Portadown
Spa Village	Pollock Drive & Mourne View Drive, Lurgan
A29 Armagh Road, Keady	
Eastern Division	
Fruithill/Glenhill Park, Belfast	Highfield Drive, Belfast
St Meryl Park/Anderstown Park, Belfast	Melfort Drive, Tullycarnet, Belfast
Dunmisk Park, Slemish Way etc, Belfast	Killynure Road, Carryduff
Orby Drive Area, Belfast	Milltown Avenue, Belfast

Willowvale Avenue/Suffolk Crescent, Belfast	Aghalee Village
Ladybrook Crescent, Belfast	Pembroke Loop Road, Dunmurry
Ardgowan Street, Belfast	Drumbo Village, Drumbo
Lower Serpentine Road Area (Glenhurst), Belfast	Monkstown Estate (Devenish Drive), Newtownabbey
Highbury Gardens area, Belfast	Ballyduff Road, Newtownabbey
Henderson Avenue, Belfast	Ballycrochan Road Area, Bangor (Stage 1)
St James Park, Belfast	Ballycrochan Road Area, Bangor (Stage 2)
Salisbury Avenue/Hughenden Area, Belfast	Crawfordsburn Village
White City, Belfast	Bloomfield Road South, Bangor
Wilgar Street, Belfast	Prospect Road, Bangor
Kansas Avenue etc, Belfast	Godfrey Avenue, Bangor
Western Division	
Killen	Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt
Coa Road, Enniskillen	Knockloughrim
Ballinamallard	Clady
Windmill Housing area, Dungannon	Trasna Way, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh
Coagh Village	

FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06

Northern Division	
Parkhall Road, Antrim	Ballystrudder Village, Islandmagee
Durnish Road, Antrim	Kilrea
Warden Street, Suffolk Street and Fisherwick Gardens, Ballymena	Killowen Street, Kyles Brae & Shuttle Hill, Coleraine
Chichester Park & Moat Road, Ballymena	Galliagh, Derry (Phase 2)
Ballymena Town Centre (Mill Street)	Lonemoor Road, Derry
Cloughmills Village	Hatmore Park, Kylemore Park, Derry
Carncastle Village	
Southern Division	
Tullybrannigan, Newcastle	Churchill Park, Portadown
Chancellors Road South, Newry	Sloan Street, Lurgan
Ballylough Road, Annsborough	Lake Street, Lurgan
Carrowdore	Gilford Road, Portadown
Scrabo Estate, Newtownards	Ashgrove Road, Portadown

High Street, Newry	Callenbridge Road/Nursery Road, Armagh
Milltown Road, Burren	Darkley Road, Keady
Old Warrenpoint Road, Newry	Portadown Road, Tandragee
Ballymartin	Meeting Street, Dromore
Killycomaine Drive, Portadown	Gallows Street, Dromore
Eastern Division	
Springfield Park, Belfast	Burnthill/Richmond Area, Newtownabbey
Ballyhenry/Glenvarna, Newtownabbey	Queens Park, Newtownabbey
Carnvue Road, Newtownabbey	Knockeden/Flush, Belfast
Mayfair, Belfast	Fairview Road, Newtownabbey
Rathgill Park, Bangor	Conlig Village
Stoneyford Village	Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast
Netwownbreda Village	Culcavy Village
Sunnyside Street, Belfast	Colinbridge Area, Newtownabbey (Advisory 20mph)
Cavehill Road, Belfast	Godfrey Avenue, Bangor
Rathmore Drive, Rathcoole	Upper Whiterock Road, Belfast
Glengoland Estate, Belfast	Iris Drive, Belfast
Inverary Area, Belfast	Westland Road, Belfast
Ballygomartin Road, Belfast	Moneyreagh Village
Highfield Drive Area, Belfast	Alfred Street area, Belfast
Western Division	
Pomeroy	Springhill Park, Strabane
Stewartstown	Lack
Killyman	Kesh
Moygashel	Brookmount Road, Omagh
Sion Mills	

FINANCIAL YEAR 2006/07

Northern Division	
Cullybackey Village	Edenmore Road from Greystone to Mounteden
Crumlin Village	Church Road, Drumahoe (Phase 1)
Gracehill Village	Elmwood Street/Cable Street, Derry
Southern Division	
Killough	Drumnacanny Village
Saintfield	Meadowbrook, Craigavon
Portaferry	Mill Hill, Waringstown

Railway Street, Comber	Poyntzpass Village
Movilla Street, Newtownards	Scarva Street, Banbridge
Harbour Road, Kilkeel	Lawrencetown Village
Newry Road, Kilkeel	Moneyslane Village
Bridal Loanan, Warrenpoint	
Eastern Division	
Burnside Village	Knockenagh Avenue, Newtownabbey
Ballyeaston Village	Cashel Drive, Newtownabbey
Harberton Park, Belfast	Carnhill Road, Newtownabbey
Moss Road, Newtownabbey	Knockmore Estate, Lisburn
Gransha Road, Bangor	Looiland Park, Belfast
Duncairn Gardens, Belfast	Ballyliderry Village
Erinvale Avenue, Belfast	Dunraven Park area, Belfast
Benmore Drive, Belfast	Downshire Road, Belfast
Backwood Road, Moira	Burney's Lane, Newtownabbey
Cranley Road, Bangor	Cupar Street Upper, Belfast
Western Division	
Castlecaulfield, Dungannon	Carrickmore, Omagh
Ballycolman, Strabane (Phase 2)	Coleshill & Rossorry Church Road, Enniskillen
Brackaville Road, Coalisland	Draperstown/Straw, Magheratelt
Brookeborough, Fermanagh	Tirkane Road & Parks, Maghera
Carland Road, Dungannon	Windmill Heights, Enniskillen

Details for the financial year 2007/08 have not, as yet, been collated by Roads Service.

Monitoring of scheme impact is part of the overall assessment of the Traffic Calming Scheme effectiveness. These impact assessments are carried out over a three year period following the completion of the scheme, when the collision history involving vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, is monitored.

Carland Bridge Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development when the Carland Bridge scheme, and the associated works along Mulnagore Road and Anaghquin Road in the Cookstown District Council area, are due to start. (AQW 1893/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the A29 Carland Bridge Realignment scheme and associated works at Mulnagore Road and Anaghquin Road are expected to commence on site during April or May 2009.

Capital and Maintenance Budgets

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the (i) capital budgets; and (ii) maintenance budgets, for the (a) Dungannon; (b) Cookstown; and (c) Magherafelt District Council areas. (AQW 1895/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The tables below detail the capital budget allocations for Major Works and Network Development for 2008/09, shown by relevant Council area:-

MAJOR WORKS

Council	Scheme	2008/09 Budget Allocation* £k
Dungannon	A4/A5 Improvements (A4 Annaghilla and A5 Tullyvar).	2000
	A29 Carland Bridge Improvement.	250
Cookstown	A29 Cookstown Eastern Distributor.	550
Magherafelt	A6 Dualling – M22 to Castledawson Roundabout.	750
	A31 Magherafelt Bypass.	850

* Allocation subject to change throughout the financial year.

NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Council	Local Transport Safety Measures £k	Bridge Strengthening £k	Street Lighting £k
Dungannon	780	213	90
Cookstown	465	24	50
Magherafelt	535	113	60

I can advise the Member that Roads Service does not apportion its maintenance budget equally across District Council areas. Resources available for each maintenance activity (resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting, etc) are apportioned to District Council areas using appropriate indicators of need. This helps to ensure an equitable distribution of funds across the whole of the North. Therefore, District Council analysis is performed on the actual maintenance expenditure, after the end of the financial year.

Introduction of 20mph Zones

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the areas in Ards Borough Council where 20 mph zones are being planned. (AQW 1896/09)

The Minister for Regional Development:

My Department's Roads Service has advised that current guidance permits the introduction of 20mph zones in residential areas only in cases where such limits are clearly self enforcing and where there is agreement with the PSNI. Experience shows that 20 mph zones in residential areas are ineffective without also implementing traffic calming measures.

While a 20mph zone has already been introduced in the Scrabo Estate, Newtownards, there are currently no plans to introduce any further schemes in the Ards Council area.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what work Northern Ireland Water plans to carry out to alleviate flood problems in (i) 2008/9; (ii) 2009/10; and (iii) 2010/11. (AQW 1907/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it plans to invest approximately £80 million during 2008/09 and a further £45 million during 2009/10 on improvements to the sewerage network system throughout the North. The alleviation of flooding will be a major beneficiary of this level of investment. Areas targeted for improvement include Ballycastle, Portrush and Coleraine.

Any projects planned for 2010/11 will depend on the outcome of the price control review in 2010, following which a prioritised programme of capital work will be developed.

Installation of Street Lighting

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the installation of street lighting from the Coast Road in Larne to the Black arch at Drainsbay. (AQW 1921/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that due to the nature and location of the Black Arch at Drainsbay, it has been agreed with Larne Borough Council to install, on a pilot basis, low level street lighting which requires specialist equipment. This equipment has been ordered and delivery is expected within the next four to six weeks.

When the equipment has been received there will be an initial stage of installation and assessment prior to full completion of the scheme.

Roads Service

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development what mechanisms does Roads Service have in place to ensure that all aggregates being supplied to its projects have the appropriate levy paid on them. (AQW 1925/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service adopts the use of certificates, audit procedures, and random checks to ensure that the appropriate levy is paid on virgin aggregates. These measures ensure that:

- signed certificates are included in contract documents, confirming that aggregates are to be sourced from registered suppliers;
- Contractors confirm details of aggregate suppliers and their registration numbers at project meetings, or at regular intervals;
- random on-site checking of suppliers at source are carried out at a frequency commensurate with the risk factors for the project; and
- infractions by Contractors are recorded in Contractor Performance Reports.

While it is accepted that Roads Service does not have direct responsibility to regulate this levy, it nevertheless is important to my Department to do all that is reasonably practical to ensure compliance.

Vesting Land at Harbour Road

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development why there has been a delay, of over three years, in vesting land at Harbour Road, Ballyhalbert to widen and improve the road. (AQW 1932/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that they are not currently vesting, or have any plans to vest, any land at Harbour Road, Ballyhalbert.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development why properties in Belfast that are owned by Northern Ireland Water are being sold when contracts on properties leased by the organisation are being extended. (AQW 1933/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it occupies seven properties in or near Belfast City Centre. Two of these properties are owned by Northern Ireland Water and neither are being sold. The remaining properties are leased. One of the leased properties which belongs

to a private owner, is being sold with Northern Ireland Water as sitting tenant until 2012.

Traffic Flows

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average daily traffic flow for (i) the Rathgael Road; and (ii) the Balloo Road, Bangor. (AQW 1966/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approx 300 automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the North's road network. Roads Service has advised that there is one automatic traffic counting site located on the Rathgael Road. Unfortunately there is no automatic traffic counting site currently situated on the Balloo Road, Bangor. Therefore, it is not possible to provide the current average daily flow for this road.

With regard to AQW 1967/09 I can advise that Roads Service has one automatic traffic counting site located on the Bangor Ring Road.

The table below details the latest Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for Rathgael Road and Bangor Ring Road, for which records are available.

Census Point Number	Location	AADT	Year of Census
504	Rathgael Road, Bangor	16014	2006
506	Ring Road, Bangor	22877	2006

Traffic Flows

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average daily traffic flow for the Ring Road in Bangor. (AQW 1967/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approx 300 automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the North's road network. Roads Service has advised that there is one automatic traffic counting site located on the Rathgael Road. Unfortunately there is no automatic traffic counting site currently situated on the Balloo Road, Bangor. Therefore, it is not possible to provide the current average daily flow for this road.

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504	Rathgael Road, Bangor	16014	2006
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Road Safety Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many road safety schemes, with flashing warning lights, have been completed for schools in the North Down constituency. (AQW 1968/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is committed to installing road safety facilities outside schools as part of the Travelwise Safer Routes to Schools initiative. This typically involves providing flashing school warning signs and enhanced road safety features near schools. Locations are prioritised taking into account, the history of collisions leading to personal injury, volume and speeds of vehicles on the road in question, as well as other factors, such as existing road features near the school.

I can advise that under this initiative, Roads Service has provided flashing school warning signs at four schools in the North Down constituency in the last 3 years, namely: Sullivan Upper High School, Belfast Road, Holywood; Glenlola Primary School, Bloomfield Road, Bangor; Redburn Primary School, Old Holywood Road, Holywood; and St Comgall's Primary School, Brunswick Road, Bangor.

Ballyhalbert High Street

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development when the final surface will be put down on High Street, Ballyhalbert; and why the original timescale was delayed. (AQW 1978/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Mr Department's Roads Service has confirmed that the final wearing course resurfacing on High Street, Ballyhalbert will be laid before the end of the current financial year.

This work was delayed to facilitate the construction of the new primary school. I am sure the member will appreciate that by rescheduling this work, Roads Service has ensured that utility connections for the new school, which will require excavations and reinstatements, are not carried out on a newly surfaced carriageway.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the reasons why Northern Ireland Water has underestimated its income; and what action he is taking to prevent a reoccurrence of this. (AQW 1979/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has not underestimated its income. It has informed my Department that new reporting systems, which are supporting more accurate forecasting and monitoring along with continuous improvement in billing data, have indicated a potential shortfall in income of £5 million to £7 million compared to the original 2008/09 budget estimate. The projections are complicated by factors such as the impact on consumption of the unseasonably wet weather, a downturn in the housing market and difficult economic conditions. There are also reservations about the quality of some of the data used. It should be noted that the level of variance, which is less than 10% of annual budgeted income, is not unprecedented in the water industry.

Northern Ireland Water is currently carrying out a further analysis, which is due to be completed by the end of November. This analysis has the benefit of a further 8 months data and should provide a more reliable income projection.

Northern Ireland Water has assured me that, as it reinforces its data quality and consolidates the new reporting systems, the accuracy of forecasting will continue to improve.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Home Improvement Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the new Housing Executive home improvement schemes for the Silverstream area of Bangor, over the next 3 years. (AQW 1469/09)

The Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): The Housing Executive does not own any properties in the Silverstream area of Bangor.

Home Improvement Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the new Housing Executive home improvement schemes for the Clondeboye area of Bangor, over the next 3 years. (AQW 1470/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has an external cyclical maintenance scheme programmed for the financial year 2010/11 for 52 properties in the Clandeboyne area of Bangor.

Shared Neighbourhood Programme

Dr Farry asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration she is giving to the designation of all, or part, of the Loughview/Redburn Estate in Holywood as a shared future housing area. (AQW 1498/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I recently launched the Shared Neighbourhood Programme that will involve 30 existing estates over the next three years being designated as a Shared Future Neighbourhood.

The first five neighbourhoods for year one (2008) of the programme have already been announced and significant progress is being made towards identifying the next twenty five neighbourhoods for inclusion in years 2 (2009) and 3 (2010) of the programme.

I am happy to confirm that Loughview/Redburn will be considered in a future phase of this programme.

Home Improvement Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans she has for Housing Executive Home Improvement schemes in the Abbey Garden area of Millisle, over the next 3 years. (AQW 1534/09)

The Minister for Social Development: One scheme, for heating replacement in 9 dwellings at Abbey Gardens Millisle, is planned to start in April 2009.

New Window Scheme

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development (i) when the new window scheme for the Glen Estate, Newtownards, will be started and completed; and (ii) to give the reasons for the delay. (AQW 1560/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I refer the Member to the answer I gave him in response to AQW 1123/09. There are no delays with these schemes; they are programmed to start as previously outlined.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications have been made to the Warm Homes Scheme from (i) the Ards Borough

Council area; and (ii) the Strangford constituency, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1606/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The number of applications made to the Warm Homes Scheme in 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 from Ards Borough Council and Strangford Constituency is as follows:

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

	Ards Council	Strangford Constituency
01/04/05 to 31/03/06	318	463
01/04/06 to 31/03/07	532	667
01/04/07 to 31/03/08	594	734

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development why there have been delays in allocating money from the Warm Homes Scheme in (i) the Ards Borough Council area; and (ii) the Strangford constituency. (AQW 1607/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Scheme has become a victim of its own success. The popularity of the Scheme has caused waiting lists to develop in recent years. In order to reduce the waiting list I instructed Eaga plc to introduce prioritisation measures to ensure that those people in greatest need will be assisted first. Applicants with no central heating, solid fuel or Economy 7 are now treated as a priority. Applications are processed on a priority basis and not on a borough council or constituency basis.

My officials have finalised the changes to the Warm Homes Scheme and these are now the subject of public consultation. The consultation exercise will run until 19 December 2008.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been allocated under the Warm Homes Scheme to applicants in (i) the Ards Borough Council area; and (ii) Strangford constituency. (AQW 1608/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The table below details the total spend on heating and insulation measures in Ards Borough Council and Strangford Constituency from the Warm Homes Scheme began in 2001 until 31 March 2008.

TOTAL MEASURE SPEND

	Ards Council	Strangford Constituency
Years 1-7 (ending 31/03/2008)	£2,330,845.48	£2,909,203.90

New Build Social House

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the average cost of a new build social house. (AQW 1623/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has just completed a review of the 'Total Cost Indicators' associated with the Social Housing Development Programme.

Whilst costs vary from scheme to scheme, the average cost of a new build, 5 person, 3 bedroom house (the benchmark unit) is currently £163,000.

Time Spent at Department's Headquarters

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many full days she has spent at her Department's headquarters since taking up office. (AQW 1637/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My duties as an Executive Minister often require me to be present at Stormont on plenary days and for other Executive-related and committee business. In addition, outside visits and meetings are an important feature of my schedule and allow me to meet as wide a range of people as possible and to see for myself the important work that is being done by individuals, groups and communities across Northern Ireland.

Since taking office I have spent all or part of 144 days at my Department's headquarters building, including 15 when I did not have any outside meetings or other engagements.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration she has given to bringing the Warm Homes Scheme into line with a similar scheme in England. (AQW 1663/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Warm Homes Scheme is broadly similar to the Warm Front Scheme in England but it takes account of the unique circumstances which face householders in Northern Ireland. The Warm Homes Scheme has been the

subject of a Northern Ireland Audit Office report and more recently a Public Accounts Committee hearing. Taking on board the recommendations made by the Audit Office I have proposed a number of changes to the Warm Homes Scheme. These proposed changes are now the subject of a public consultation exercise which will run until 19 December. A new Warm Homes Scheme will be introduced from 1 April 2009.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development if socially beneficial conditions were included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme, Derry/Londonderry, contract selection process; and if not to detail the reasons. (AQW 1673/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Socially beneficial conditions were not included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme.

The reason for this was the Dove Gardens scheme was advertised on 23 October 2007. This was prior to the publication in May 2008 when the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Central Procurement Directorate issued guidance on how equality of opportunity and sustainable development may be integrated into public procurement.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, if socially beneficial conditions were included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry, (i) what weighting was given to them; (ii) what evidence the prospective bidders provided to support their record on this; and (iii) how the successful bidder provided this evidence. (AQW 1674/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Socially beneficial conditions were not included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, if socially beneficial outcomes were included in the contract for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry, what strategy her Department proposed to (i) those registering expressions of interest; and (ii) the Central Procurement Directorate, to identify social need, and to use the contract to meet that need. (AQW 1676/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Socially beneficial outcomes were not included in the contract for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry.

In May 2008, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Central Procurement Directorate issued guidance on how equality of opportunity and sustainable development may be integrated into public procurement. However, the Dove Gardens scheme was advertised in October 2007, prior to the issue of the guidance.

People Visually Impaired

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development what benefits are available to people registered as (i) partially sighted; and (ii) visually impaired. (AQW 1685/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Depending on the individual circumstances a range of social security benefits is available to people registered as partially sighted or visually impaired including disability living allowance, attendance allowance, employment and support allowance, incapacity benefit and income-related benefits, such as income support and pension credit.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department made a proposal to the Central Procurement Directorate on the nature of socially beneficial conditions, linked to needs assessment and the numbers of those who could benefit, in relation to the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry. (AQW 1688/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Socially beneficial conditions were not included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry. Therefore no proposal was made to the Central Procurement Directorate on this issue.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department was aware that it could construct its proposal for Dove Gardens in Derry/ Londonderry based on need before taking advice from the Central Procurement Directorate. (AQW 1691/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Procurement Board approved Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement Guidance on 13 March 2008. The

Guidance was subsequently disseminated to Public Bodies including the Housing Executive under cover of Dear Accounting Officer (DFP 05/08) letter dated 29 May 2008. The objective of the Guidance was to support public bodies integrate equality of opportunity and sustainability including social benefits into the procurement process. As the Dove Gardens scheme was publicly advertised on 23 October 2007 and prior to the issue of the Guidance, the Housing Executive was not in a position to advise Housing Associations on the inclusion of socially beneficial conditions in public contracts.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the advice given by the Central Procurement Directorate about the nature and use of socially beneficial conditions within the contract for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry. (AQW 1693/09)

The Minister for Social Development: No advice was given by Central Procurement Directorate about the nature and use of socially beneficial conditions within the contract for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry.

Dove Gardens Scheme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, if socially beneficial conditions are not contained in the contract for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry, what expectations her Department has that the contractor will deliver social benefits; and on what these expectations are based. (AQW 1695/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Socially beneficial conditions were not included in the criteria for the Dove Gardens scheme in Derry/Londonderry. In May 2008, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Central Procurement Directorate issued guidance on how equality of opportunity and sustainable development may be integrated into public procurement. However, the Dove Gardens scheme was advertised in October 2007, prior to the issue of the guidance.

Social Benefits

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development what action her Department is taking to ensure that the delivery of social benefits is contained within all future contracts. (AQW 1696/09)

The Minister for Social Development: In May 2008, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Central Procurement Directorate issued guidance on how equality of opportunity and sustainable development may be integrated into public procurement. This provides guidance on how to integrate equality and sustainable development considerations into the procurement process, while meeting the existing statutory duties in relation to equality of opportunity and sustainable development.

The Guidance advocates the New Engineering Contract 3 (NEC3) suite of contracts and that all contracts should be seen to be promoting equality and sustainable development. The Department for Social Development has appointed the Department of Communities & Local Government National Change Agent to advise Housing Associations on future procurement of contracts and on EU Procurement policies.

In October 2008, the Department for Social Development published its Procurement Strategy for the Social Housing Development Programme. Collaborative procurement will provide the conditions for integrating resources, improving consistency and continuity and obtaining better value for money and continuous improvement from clients, contractors and suppliers.

Housing Executive

Mr Bresland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the fair employment practices of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; and (ii) the number of staff employed in each District office broken down by grade or salary band and by religious background. (AQW 1712/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is committed to the principles of fair employment and as such has had an Equal Opportunities Policy in place since the introduction of equality legislation. Appointments to all vacancies are on the basis of merit and robust equality systems are in place to ensure equality legislation is adhered to. Equality of opportunity is reflected in the day to day management of staff and in the recruitment process.

The Housing Executive developed a comprehensive Affirmative Action Plan in 2003 in consultation with the Northern Ireland Equality Commission. The purpose of the Plan was to ensure equality of opportunity in relation to all equality groupings as outlined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, with regard to employment opportunities.

The table below details the staff employed in each District Office broken down by grade and religious background:

Area	Grade	Nos.	Protestant	Roman Catholic	NK
Belfast	LV01	20			
	LV02	189			
	LV03	66			
	LV04	111			
	LV05	30			
	LV06	19			
	*LV07>	12			
	TL02	32			
	Total	479	160	311	8
North East	LV01	9			
	LV02	110			
	LV03	55			
	LV04	82			
	LV05	26			
	LV06	16			
	*LV07>	10			
	TL02	31			
	Total	339	216	119	4
South East	LV01	8			
	LV02	96			
	LV03	41			
	LV04	92			
	LV05	30			
	LV06	14			
	*LV07>	10			
	TL02	23			
	Total	314	193	110	11
South	LV01	17			
	LV02	83			
	LV03	37			
	LV04	75			
	LV05	24			
	LV06	13			
	*LV07>	6			
	TL02	20			
	Total	275	99	170	6

Area	Grade	Nos.	Protestant	Roman Catholic	NK
West	LV01	13			
	LV02	88			
	LV03	36			
	LV04	90			
	LV05	23			
	LV06	16			
	*LV07>	11			
	TL02	20			
	Total	297	73	221	3

*Grades Level 7 and above

LV = "Level"

TL02 = "Temporary level"

Pensioners in Poverty

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development what estimate she has made of the number of pensioners who would be taken out of poverty if there was 100 percent take-up of entitlement to (i) winter fuel payments; (ii) pension credit; and (iii) housing benefit. (AQW 1744/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information requested is not available in the form requested. An assessment of levels of take up for pension credit and housing benefit for tenants is published on the DSD website (http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/statistics_and_research_take_up.htm) and it is hoped to publish the next report in January 2009.

Households are deemed to be in poverty when their equivalised income (before or after housing costs are deducted, according to definition) falls below 60% of UK median equivalised income. Whilst we have accurate data on benefit uptake, we are not as yet able to draw firm conclusions on the impact on the numbers of people in poverty.

I remain concerned at the impact of recent inflation on the ability of poorer households to maintain their expenditure on necessities, and this cannot be assessed from conventional poverty measures. Accordingly, I have commissioned further statistical analysis in this area.

Housing Development Site

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Social Development if she will make a commitment to ensure

that the housing development site at 120/130 Bangor Road, Newtownards, is secured for social housing, as originally intended with the owners of the site.

(AQW 1753/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The proposed scheme at 120-130 Bangor Road, Newtownards has been submitted to the Housing Executive for consideration as part of the annual bidding process for the formulation of the new 5 year Social Housing Development Programme 2009/10-2013/14.

Whilst the proposal for 26 units has been supported in terms of housing need for 2009/10, the Housing Executive will have to prioritise the bids received in accordance with its Strategic Guidelines.

Legahory Emergency Halting Site

Mr Simpson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to her answer to AQW 1216/09, to confirm that the Legahory emergency halting site will not be considered as a possible site in the Housing Executive's consideration of 'other necessary sites in Craigavon'. (AQW 1761/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Legahory Emergency Halting Site is intended to be a temporary site pending the development of a permanent transit site in the Craigavon area. Once such a site has been acquired and developed it is planned to close the Legahory temporary site.

The proposed development of facilities on the Emergency Halting Site at Legahory Green is in response to concerns raised by various Traveller representative groups and the Children's Commissioner who have lobbied the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for improved living conditions on the Site and to comply with Craigavon Borough Council licensing stipulations.

Housing Executive

Mr Simpson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to her answers to AQO 2127/08 and AQW 1216/09, to confirm that when the Housing Executive finishes its consideration of 'other necessary sites in Craigavon', the Legahory emergency halting site will close. (AQW 1765/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Legahory Emergency Halting Site is intended to be a temporary site pending the development of a permanent transit site in the Craigavon area. Once such a site has been acquired and developed it is planned to close the Legahory temporary site, as when permanent provision becomes available, the temporary site will no longer be required.

Housing Associations

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development when funding will be available for Housing Associations to purchase houses, particularly on the Greyabbey Road, Ballywalter. (AQW 1774/09)

The Minister for Social Development: A proposal to purchase 14 off-the-shelf units at Greyabbey Road, Ballywalter has been submitted to the Housing Executive for consideration as part of the annual bidding process for the formulation of the new 5 year Social Housing Development Programme 2009/10 – 2013/14, which is scheduled to be published in January 2009. Whilst the proposal for 14 units has been supported in terms of housing need for 2009/10, the Housing Executive will have to prioritise the bids received in accordance with its Strategic Guidelines to achieve the maximum number of starts within the available budget.

Sites Owned by Department

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development what sites are owned by her Department in the East Belfast constituency; and to outline the plans and timescale for development of these sites. (AQW 1792/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Department owns sixteen sites in the East Belfast Constituency. These sites are held mainly for regeneration and or social housing purposes. The sites are owned by either the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or the Department. Some are currently being developed as part of the ongoing regeneration programme or being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplanning exercise. A number are also included in a Social Housing Development Programme.

Details are set out in the table below:

Site	Plans	Timescale
Lower Braniel Rd	Connswater Homes Housing Association to provide 23 units of social housing.	2008/09
97-107 Gilnahirk Road	10 units of social housing (currently un-nominated to a Housing Association).	2010/11
Sunderland/Sterling Road	Currently on the Housing Executive's Surplus Land Schedule, but has not yet been allocated to a scheme.	n/a

Site	Plans	Timescale
Queen's Quay (located on the east bank of the River Lagan)	Subject to an appeal against outcome of a recent judicial review. Not possible at this stage to comment on the development of this site.	n/a
Pottinger's Quay (junction of Albertbridge Street and Short Strand)	9 storey building comprising 27 social housing units with the ground floor and mezzanine level being reserved for a community use.	Underway - Due to complete in Autumn 2009
East Bridge Quay (Queen Elizabeth Bridge/ Queens Bridge)	Hard landscaped site. There are currently no plans for development.	n/a
155-157 Newtownards Road & 2 Tower Street. Vacant corner site.	Site acquired by DSD for redevelopment. Being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplan exercise.	n/a
232 Newtownards Road.	This vacant corner property acquired by DSD for redevelopment. Being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplan exercise.	n/a
275 & 277 Albertbridge Road.	Site acquired by DSD for redevelopment. Being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplan exercise.	n/a
2-10 Castlereagh Street / 139-141 Albertbridge Road, 1a Stormount Lane and 16-24 Castlereagh Street	Four sites have been acquired by DSD at the junction of Albertbridge Rd and Castlereagh St to assemble one large development site. This is being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplan exercise.	n/a
98/98a Templemore Ave	Former Templemore Avenue Hospital was acquired by DSD for redevelopment. Being held pending the outcome of the Inner East Masterplan exercise.	n/a
183-191 Beersbridge Road	Acquired by the Department for redevelopment. This site has been agreed for sale to a preferred developer. A planning application for 18 apartments has been submitted.	2009/10
211-217 Beersbridge Road	Acquired by the Department for redevelopment. This site has been agreed for sale to a preferred developer. A planning application for ground floor retail units with 8 apartments above has been submitted.	2009/10

Site	Plans	Timescale
130-138 Castlereagh Street/60-64 Clandeboyne Street	These vacant premises were acquired by the Department for redevelopment. A preferred developer has been selected and it is proposed to construct a mixed use scheme providing retail, office space apartments and 'Live Work' units. The development will take 14-15 months to complete following planning approval.	2009/10
Former Rupert Stanley College, Templemore Avenue	Site including derelict listed building acquired by DSD for redevelopment. Proposals for its redevelopment will be considered in the context of the emerging Inner East Masterplan.	n/a
Ravenhill Reach/Ormeau Embankment	Development proposals agreed. Construction of a business park consisting of 27 small individual office units underway	Underway – Due to complete 2012

Help to Insulate Pensioners' Homes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development what action she is taking to increase the money available to help pensioners and old people to fully insulate their homes. (AQW 1827/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I have increased my Department's spending on fuel poverty to £35.4 million this year. The Warm Homes Scheme and the Housing Executive's Heating Replacement Scheme offer help to eligible pensioners to insulate their homes. I have bid for additional resources to heat more homes through the in-year monitoring process. However, this bid was not successful. I intend to re-submit this bid in the December monitoring round.

Economy 7 Heating Systems

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to her answer to AQW 6647/08, for her assessment of the continuing use of Economy 7 heating systems in social housing, given the increases in electricity prices over the last year. (AQW 1848/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The recent rises in fuel costs are impacting on householders across Northern Ireland. There are currently just over 11,000 Housing Executive dwellings with Economy 7 heating. The Housing Executive has been replacing Economy 7 heating where gas or oil is a technically

practical option. I believe that to be the best approach. Economy 7 is not the ideal heating system for most households. To date, the Housing Executive has succeeded in reducing the number of homes heated by Economy 7 from a peak of 26,000 to the current level.

This year, the Housing Executive plans to replace Economy 7 in 458 homes.

Housing Executive

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rents charged for those who are provided with hostel accommodation whilst awaiting a property from the Housing Executive or Housing Associations. (AQW 1849/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The rents charged for temporary accommodation vary due to size of units, facilities provided and the level of housing management input required. The average rent charged is £60.00 per week.

Temporary accommodation may be provided in Housing Executive hostels, Voluntary Sector hostels or in the private sector.

Housing Executive

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Housing Executive tenants who are in rent arrears and (ii) the amount of arrears owed to the Housing Executive. (AQW 1850/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive currently has 27,147 tenants in arrears. Of these, 23,129 are current tenants and 4,018 are former tenants. The total amount of arrears owing is £14,131,928.

Economy 7 Heating Systems

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of tenants who have Economy 7 heating systems in (a) Dairyfarm Housing Executive district; and (ii) Lisburn Housing Executive district. (AQW 1853/09)

The Minister for Social Development: There are currently 65 Housing Executive properties in Lisburn Dairyfarm and 657 properties in Lisburn Antrim Street District Office Area with Economy 7 heating systems.

Energy Efficiency in Homes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development if she has any plans to provide grants to ensure energy efficiency in homes, outside the Warm Homes Scheme, similar to the Tesco Insulation Project in other parts of the United Kingdom. (AQW 1856/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Tesco insulation project which operates in some parts of the UK is funded through Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT). CERT funding is not available in Northern Ireland and cannot be replicated here. It is my intention to use all available resources to fund the Warm Homes Scheme which will target those people in greatest need with help to insulate and heat their homes.

Tesco Insulation Project

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions her Department has had with Tesco on extending their insulation project to Northern Ireland. (AQW 1857/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has had no discussions with Tesco in relation to extending their insulation project to Northern Ireland. I have been approached by a representative from Enact Energy who, I understand, is acting on Tesco's behalf, seeking a meeting to discuss the possibility of securing Government funding to extend the Scheme to Northern Ireland. It is my intention to use all available resources to fund the Warm Homes Scheme which will target those people in greatest need with help to insulate and heat their homes.

Housing Associations New Build Programme

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) the average price paid; and (ii) her assessment of the value for money, of the homes purchased on the open market, through the Housing Association's new build programme. (AQW 1939/09)

The Minister for Social Development: During 2007/08, the average price paid to Housing Associations to acquire 'Off the shelf' housing was £173,373. The change in the market has however provided new opportunities to reduce this. For example, the average price paid for 22 units recently acquired in Lurgan was only £150k per home.

I am determined to make the best use of the limited resources available to me and if purchasing more 'Off the shelf' houses will deliver the right homes, in the right location at the right price, then I am prepared to use these homes to complement our new build programme that continues to deliver the majority of our target.

Social Housing Programme

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to provide a breakdown of last year's social housing programme, in which 1500 social housing starts were completed. (AQW 1940/09)

The Minister for Social Development: In 2007/2008 there were a total of 1595 social housing starts. The attached table provides a breakdown of the number and location of each scheme.

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
Ards			
	81 Blenheim Drive, Newtownards	1	
	Upper Crescent, Comber	50	
	16 Lenamore Park, Newtownards	1	
	40 Canberra Gardens, Newtownards	1	
	11 Burnreagh Court, Newtownards	1	
	94 Shackleton Walk, Newtownards	1	
	38 Blenheim Drive, Newtownards	1	
	11 Abbot Gardens, Newtownards	1	
	3 Laburnum Drive, Comber	1	
	Habinteg Acquisitions, Newtownards ESPs Phase 2 (DPF)	3	
	Habinteg Acquisitions, Newtownards ESPs	2	
	Ilex Avenue, Newtownards	6	
	Ards ESPs, Phase 1	3	
	Ards Rural Acquisitions Phase 1A (DPF)	4	
	Ards Acquisitions Phase 1B	3	
	William Street, Newtownards	12	
Total Ards			91
Banbridge			
	Annaclone, Ph2, Banbridge	6	
	Old School Site, Phase 2, Kinallen	10	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	PSNI Site, Moy/Beechgrove, Dromore/Hillside Pk, Gilford	2	
Total Banbridge			18
Belfast			
	Acquisitions, Phase 3, West Belfast	6	
	53 Abetta Parade, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	3 Rinnelea Grove, Belfast (West Belfast Acq 3B)	1	
	108 Moyard Parade, Belfast (West Belfast Acq 3A)	1	
	BCHA East Belfast Acquisitions Phase 1	7	
	BCHA East Belfast Acquisitions Phase 1A	7	
	BCHA East Belfast Acquisitions Phase 1B	3	
	135 Horn Drive (West Belfast Acq 3C)	1	
	221 Holywood Road, Belfast	32	
	14-20 University Street, Belfast	20	
	Glenside, Ligoniel	32	
	2A Brookhill Avenue, Belfast	11	
	339 - 343 Donegall Road, Belfast	10	
	McAuley Street, Phase 3, Belfast	14	
	99 Manor Street, Belfast	1	
	North Howard Street, Belfast	46	
	145 Cavehill Road, Belfast (DPF)	6	
	1-3 Thorndale Avenue, Belfast (OS) (DPF)	6	
	8 McDonnell Street, Belfast	1	
	20 Ballymurphy Parade, Belfast	1	
	North Belfast Acquisitions (DPF)	17	
	Lower Antrim Road, Infill, Belfast	16	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	North Phase 2B, Balfour Avenue, Belfast (ALP)	9	
	Norfolk Road, Belfast	18	
	10 Clifton Crescent, Belfast	1	
	18 Bloomfield Drive, Belfast	1	
	Maple Villas, Springfield Road, Belfast	16	
	Springfield Mill, Springfield Road, Belfast	9	
	Connswater, Phase 3, Belfast (T)	88	
	Harland Walk, Belfast	18	
	6-10 Severn Street, Belfast	6	
	15 Bryson Court, Belfast	1	
	Acquisitions, Ph2A, Connswater	2	
	Connswater Acquisitions West Belfast (DPF)	1	
	Connswater Acquisitions West Belfast Phase 1A	2	
	27 Newcastle Street, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	179 York Park, Belfast	1	
	Gate Lodge, Flax Street, Belfast	9	
	Ardoyne Acquisitions, Ph6B, Belfast	3	
	Ardoyne Acquisitions Phase 7A, Belfast	6	
	Ardoyne Acquisitions Phase 7B, Belfast	1	
	107 Duneden Park & 24 Stratford Gardens, Belfast (DPF)	2	
	13 Kingston Court, Belfast	1	
	Ardoyne Acquisitions, Phase 7C, Belfast	1	
	Ardoyne Acquisitions, Phase 7D, Belfast	1	
	162-172 Antrim Road, Belfast	16	
	293 Antrim Road, Belfast	8	
	34 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	9	
	45 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	15	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	Carvill Site, Annadale, Belfast	50	
	Grove North Belfast Acquisitions Phase 1A	2	
	Grove North Belfast Acquisitions Phase 1B	1	
	Lawnbrook Avenue, Shankill Road, Belfast	6	
	23 Thorndale Avenue, Belfast (OTS)	3	
	3 Rigby Close, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	12 Rosemount Gardens, Belfast	3	
	8 Glandore Avenue, Belfast (OS)	5	
	Newington Acquisitions, Ph6B, Belfast	2	
	Newington Acquisitions, Ph7, Belfast	7	
	Hillview Rd/Crumlin Rd, Belfast	75	
	Travellers Sites, Monagh Road, Phases 1&2, Belfast	16	
	233 Whitewell Road, Belfast	12	
	Glendhu Belfast	14	
	Derryveagh Drive, Suffolk Road, Belfast	2	
	Jamaica Street, Phase 1A, Belfast	6	
	Colinpark Street, Belfast	3	
	Stanhope Site, Phase 1, Belfast	10	
	1 Creeslough Court, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	143d Glen Road, Belfast	2	
	33 Danube Street, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	30 Lenadoon Avenue, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	83 Beechmount Grove, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	90 Creeslough Park, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	50 Beechfield Street, Belfast (DPF)	1	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	3 Mountförde Gardens, Belfast	1	
	Dunmisk Park, Phase 3, Belfast	21	
	Devonshire Tradas, Phase 2, Belfast	23	
	42 Glenalina Park, Whiterock Rd, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	83 Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast (DPF)	1	
	42 Ballymurphy Road, Belfast	1	
	Westbank Home, Palmerston Road, Belfast	40	
Total Belfast			800
Castlereagh			
	Gleneagles Gardens, Ballybeen	12	
	Knockbracken Healthcare Park	20	
Total Castlereagh			32
Cookstown			
	Old Rectory Park, Cookstown	3	
Total Cookstown			3
Craigavon			
	Gilpin Mews, Old Portadown Road, Lurgan	20	
	Lilburn Hall & Bowen's Close, Lurgan	6	
Total Craigavon			26
Derry			
	Springtown Road Ph4/ Hawthorn Phase 3, Derry	14	
	Acquisitions Derry Phase 10 (DPF)	10	
	Derry Acquisitions Phase 11	6	
	Habinteg Acquisitions Derry Phase 9	6	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	Westbank DPF, Derry	3	
	Derry Acquisitions (DPF)	4	
	West Bank, Ph15A, Derry	5	
	West Bank, Ph15B, Derry	4	
	West Bank, Ph15C, Derry	5	
	West Bank, Ph15D, Derry	4	
	West Bank, Ph15E, Derry	7	
	West Bank, Ph15F, Derry	3	
	West Bank, Ph15G, Derry	6	
	West Bank, Ph15H, Derry	6	
	West Bank Phase 15I, Derry	7	
	West Bank Phase 15J, Derry	5	
	West Bank Phase 15K, Derry	5	
	West Bank Phase 15L, Derry	4	
	West Bank Phase 15M, Derry	8	
	West Bank Phase 15N, Derry	1	
	28 Bracken Park, Derry	1	
	14 Knockalla Park, Derry	1	
	10 Elaghmore Park, Derry	1	
	149 Gallaigh Park, Derry	1	
	Rural Acquisitions, Ballycanice Close, Eglinton	3	
	Rural Acquisitions, Eglinton Phase 2	3	
	Bonds Hill, Derry	17	
	15 Curragh Walk, Derry	1	
Total Derry			141
Down			
	Acquisitions, Phase 1, Downpatrick	7	
	45A Bracken Avenue, Newcastle	1	
	Down ESPs Phase 1	2	
	Down ESPs Phase 2	2	
Total Down			12
Dungannon			
	Thomas Street, Dungannon	10	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	Millview, Manor, Dungannon	29	
	Dunlea Vale, Dungannon	1	
	Acquisitions, Dungannon	9	
	West Bank Phase 15L, Derry	1	
	PSNI Site, Moy/Beechgrove, Dromore/Hillside Pk, Gilford	5	
Total Dungannon			55
Fermanagh			
	2 & 8 Mill Line, Derrygonnelly	2	
	25 Crevenish Park, Kesh (DPF)	1	
	36 Loughview Drive, Enniskillen (DPF)	1	
	Sycamore Drive, Enniskillen	7	
Total Fermanagh			11
Larne			
	Beechlands, Carnlough	6	
Total Larne			6
Limavady			
	Greysteel Phase 2, Limavady	11	
	17A Roemill Gardens, Limavady	1	
	West Bank Ph15H, Derry	1	
	West Bank Phase 15J, Derry	2	
	West Bank Phase 15M, Derry	1	
Total Limavady			16
Lisburn			
	BCHA Acquisitions Poleglass Phase 3A (24 Glenbawn Square)	1	
	BCHA Acquisitions, Poleglass Phase 3B	3	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	Cromwell's Close, Lisburn	10	
	Bellevue Manor, Lisburn	19	
	49 Ivan Street, Lisburn	1	
	Causeway Meadows, Lisburn	22	
	Connswater Acquisitions Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	Connswater Acquisitions, Poleglass Ph 1B	5	
	Flax Acquisitions, Phase 7F, Lisburn	1	
	Habinteg Greater West Belfast ESPs Phase 1	5	
	Habinteg Greater West Belfast ESPs Phase 1A	5	
	West Bank, Ph15D, Derry	1	
	9 Ardcaoin Drive, Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	3 Glenwood Walk, Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	9 Glenwood Court, Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	120 Glenkeen, Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	7 Glenwood View, Poleglass (DPF)	1	
	Ballymacoss Central, Phase 5, Lisburn	75	
Total Lisburn			154
Magherafelt			
	West Bank Phase 15K, Derry	1	
	West Bank Phase 15L, Derry	1	
Total Magherafelt			2
Moyle			
	2 Marconi Park, Ballycastle	1	
	33 Stroanshesk Park, Ballycastle	1	
	40 Altananam Park, Ballycastle	1	
Total Moyle			3

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
Newry & Mourne			
	70 Mourneview Park, Newry	1	
	Lisbane Park, Mayobridge	8	
	Newry & Mourne ESPs Phase 2	2	
	Newry & Mourne ESPs	8	
	Canal Street, Phase 3, Newry	29	
	Springmartin, Martins Lane, Newry	23	
	5 Ganna Way, Warrenpoint (DPF)	1	
Total Newry & Mourne			72
Newtownabbey			
	6 Bryson Square, Newtownabbey	1	
	Mill Road, Bawnmore (OTS)	8	
	Green Walk, Newtownabbey	22	
	Derry Acquisitions (DPF)	1	
Total Newtownabbey			32
North Down			
	3 South Avenue, Bangor	1	
	28-32 Belfast Road, Bangor & 18 Inglewood Park, Bangor	37	
	2A Springwell Drive (1 Donaghadee Road), Groomsport	24	
	32 Jackson Road, Hollywood	1	
	Mayne House, Bloomfield Road, Bangor (Croft)	9	
	14 Bloomfield Court, Bangor	1	
	15 Ballyminetrigh Gardens, Bangor	1	
	33 Ballyminetrigh Gardens, Bangor	1	
	Ards Rural Acquisitions Phase 1A (DPF)	1	

District Council	Scheme Name	Units	Total
	Ards Acquisitions Phase 1B	1	
	5 Dufferin Avenue, Bangor	2	
Total North Down			79
Strabane			
	Lismore Park, Sion Mills, Strabane	20	
	West Bank, Ph15B, Derry	1	
	West Bank, Ph15D, Derry	1	
	West Bank Ph15F, Derry	4	
	West Bank Ph15G, Derry	1	
	West Bank Ph15H, Derry	1	
	West Bank Ph15J, Derry	2	
	West Bank Ph15K, Derry	3	
	West Bank Ph15L, Derry	2	
	West Bank Phase 15N, Derry	6	
	26 Mourne Park, Newtownstewart	1	
Total Strabane			42
			1595

Housing Executive

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to the Housing Executive to bring off the shelf houses up to Housing Association standard, per unit of housing.
(AQW 1941/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information is not held in the manner requested. The acquisition cost to the NIHE will include any additional work necessary to bring an off-the-shelf house up to the appropriate standard for Housing Associations.

Housing Executive

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rent charged by (i) the Housing Executive; and (ii) Housing Associations.
(AQW 1942/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The rents charged by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

and individual Housing Associations vary depending on a range of factors including the age of the property, number and size of rooms and household amenities, such as whole house or partial heating.

It is therefore not possible to provide the information in the format the member requested.

Assistance for Tenants

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development what measures her Department has in place to assist tenants who are in rent arrears.
(AQW 1943/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has a range of measures in place to assist tenants who are in rent arrears. These include:

- Early identification and contact with the tenant regarding their rent arrears problems.
- Assessing the tenant for eligibility to Housing Benefit.
- Confidential home visits to the tenant to discuss their rent arrears problem.
- Accepting payments by instalments, if this is of help to the tenant.
- Arranging for rent arrears to be deducted from Benefits at a rate of £3.05 per week.
- With the tenant's permission, arrangements can be made for deductions to be made from Employers.
- Deductions can also be made from grants due, for example a redecoration grant.
- The Housing Executive provide basic money and budgeting advice to tenants.
- Referral to Citizen Advice Bureau can also be made for difficult or specialist cases.

Social Housing Starts

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) how many; and (ii) the geographical location, of the 1500 social housing starts that are (a) new build; (b) open market; or (c) off the shelf.
(AQW 1945/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive achieved 1595 starts during the 2007/2008 Programme year. Of these 982 were new build, 343 were purchased on the open market and 270 were purchased directly from the developer off the shelf.

The attached table shows the geographical location of the 1595 starts;

District Council	New Build	Open Market	Off the shelf
Ards	68	23	0
Banbridge	18	0	0
Belfast	554	103	143
Castlereagh	32	0	0
Cookstown	3	0	0
Craigavon	6	0	20
Derry	31	110	0
Down	0	12	0
Dungannon	16	10	29
Fermanagh	7	4	0
Larne	0	0	6
Limavady	11	5	0
Lisburn	85	28	41
Magherafelt	0	2	0
Moyle	0	3	0
Newry & Mourne	37	12	23
Newtownabbey	22	2	8
North Down	72	7	0
Strabane	20	22	0

Land at Andersonstown Barracks

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current value of the land at Andersonstown Barracks; and what consideration she has given to having the land re-valued. (AQW 1950/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The current value of the land has not been assessed. I will consider having the site revalued.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) her Department's responsibilities in relation to fuel poverty; and (ii) what measures her Department has taken to alleviate fuel poverty.

(AQW 1952/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department is committed to alleviating fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. My Department's primary tool in tackling fuel poverty is the Warm Homes Scheme which provides a range of heating and insulation measures to eligible owner occupiers or those in the private rented sector. In addition the Housing Executive administers the Heating Replacement

Scheme for those people in social housing. I have increased my Department's spending on tackling fuel poverty to £35.4 million this year.

In response to rising fuel prices I established the Fuel Poverty Task Force in May 2008. I developed a set of practical proposals from the task force report to help those people most affected by the rise in fuel prices this winter. These proposals were circulated to Ministers as a draft Executive paper. Unfortunately, the Executive did not meet so I revised the paper taking account of Ministers' views and as the Executive have still not met, I have sought clearance to bring forward my proposals under Urgent Procedure.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development if she has approached any utility companies about setting up a utility fund to alleviate fuel poverty, as suggested by Help the Aged. (AQW 1953/09)

The Minister for Social Development: When establishing the Fuel Poverty Task Force I invited all energy companies to actively participate. Representatives from NIE Energy, Phoenix Natural Gas and Firmus all engaged fully. During discussions the issue of setting up a utility fund was raised and will be explored further as part of the recommendations of the Task Force.

A package of proposals, including consideration of how the utilities could help contribute to the alleviation of Fuel poverty, is currently with the Executive.

Unfortunately the Executive has not met for several months and has not therefore considered my proposals.

Fuel Advisory Group

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development, as part of her role in the Fuel Advisory Group, what discussions she has had with the gas and electricity utility companies to reduce their charges, given the decrease in fuel prices. (AQW 1954/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Although my officials and I have engaged with the energy utilities in relation to fuel poverty, responsibility for energy prices rests with the industry regulator and with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

My fuel poverty proposals currently held up by the lack of Executive meetings include an initiative relating to the energy utilities.

People Over 60 Purchasing Homes

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development what measures she is taking to ensure that (i) people over 60 will be allowed to purchase their homes; and (ii) that Section 75 obligations will be met in relation to age. (AQW 1955/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Under the House Sales Schemes all social Housing Tenants, irrespective of age, who satisfy the eligibility criteria, may apply to buy their homes.

When the House Sales Scheme was reviewed in 2004 equality screening concluded that the proposals would not unfairly disadvantage any of the Section 75 groups.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions she has had with energy companies about their contribution towards tackling fuel poverty. (AQW 1956/09)

The Minister for Social Development: When I established the Fuel Poverty Task Force in May 2008 I invited all energy companies to actively participate. Representatives from NIE Energy, Phoenix Natural Gas and Firmus all engaged fully with the Task Force. The Task Force addressed the issue of contributions from energy companies towards tackling fuel poverty and this will be pursued as part of the recommendations from the Task force.

Land Gift Aided or Transferred by Department

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development what land, in the last five years, has her Department gift aided or transferred at a nominal or nil value to (a) organisations; (b) individuals; or (c) businesses; and to detail the (i) value; (ii) previous use; and (iii) current use, of this land. (AQW 1957/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Department has disposed of 40 sites at nominal or nil value. Details are set out in the table below:

	Date	Description	Value	Organisation / Individuals	Previous Use	Current Use
1	Jan 04	Land at Oxford Street, Belfast	£10	Laganside	Footway / Unused Subway	Restaurants / Bars
2	Nov 04	Land at Donegall Quay / Queen's Square	£100	Laganside	Footway / Roadway	New Road Layout
3	Apr 05	146-154 North Queen Street, Belfast	£58,999	Belfast City Council	Vacant Land	Multi-Sports Facility
4	Dec 06	Land at Cooke Street, Belfast	£10	An Droichead (Irish Language School)	Vacant Land (Land-Locked)	Community Garden
5	Various Over Last 5 Years	Clowney Gardens Scheme, Belfast	Nil	52 Residents	Waste Ground	Garden Extensions & Allotments
6	Various Over Last 5 Years	Springfield Drive Gardens Scheme, Belfast	Nil	17 Residents	Waste Ground	Garden Extensions & Allotments
7	April 05	Land at Spencer Road, Derry	£1	Braehead Developments	Derelict	Primary Care Medical Practice
8	June 08	Portion of Carlisle PassSteps, Derry	£1	Patrick and Kathleen Doherty	Disused Passageway	No change as yet
9	October 07	Portion of Carlisle Pass Steps, Derry	£1	Glenmore Developments	Disused Passageway	No change as yet
10	October 2004	Larne Road site, Ballymena	£1	DRD Roads	Agriculture	Road
11	June 2002	Adj to Pinebank Community Centre, Craigavon	£1	DRD	2metre Road Verge	Now part of the adopted Roadway
12	Nov 2002	Land at rear of Church, Steeple Rd, Antrim	£1	Antrim Borough Council	Vacant land	Amenity Use

	Date	Description	Value	Organisation / Individuals	Previous Use	Current Use
13	Dec 2002	Ecos Centre Ballymena	£1	Mr McDonnell	Garden	Garden
14	Dec 2002	Ecos Centre Ballymena	£1	Ballymena Borough Council	Roadway	Roadway
15	March 2003	Kiln Lane Lurgan	£1	N Gordon	Encroachment	Garden
16	March 2003	Larne Rd Ballymena	£1	DRD	Road verge	Adopted Road
17	June 2003	2 Lisoom Rd Ballymena	£1	DRD	Road verge	Perfection of title
18	February 2004	Belmont Rd Antrim	£1	Water Service	Vacant land	Pumping Station
19	September 2004	Monbrief Rd Craigavon	£1	NIHE	Vacant land	Traveller's Site
20	September 2004	Moylena Rd Antrim	NIL	DRD	Footway	Footway
21	March 2005	Land adj to 5 Franklyn Pk, Lurgan	£1	Funston & Spence	Area of Encroachment	Garden
22	April 2005	Lands adj to 7 Franklyn Pk Lurgan	£1	Mr Bibb	Area of Encroachment	Garden
23	April 2005	Land adj to 4 Franklyn Pk Lurgan	£1	D Johnston	Area of Encroachment	Garden
24.	January 2008	Lower English Street, Armagh	£1	Mr & Mrs McVeigh	Store	Store
25	June 2005	Church Road Kells	£1	DRD	Road Verge	Adopted Road
26	November 2005	Ballynamoney Lane Lurgan	£1	DRD	Vacant Land	Future Road Scheme
27	February 2006	Clanrolla Rd Portadown	£1	W Holmes	Area of Encroachment	Garden Area
28	February 2006	Derryvore Portadown	£1	Water Service	Vacant Land	Pumping Station
29	April 2006	Lakeview Rd Craigavon	£1	Craigavon Borough Council	Balancing Lakes	Balancing Lakes
30	May 2006	Rathenraw Ind Es Antrim	£1	S & E Supplies	Area of Encroachment	Industrial Unit
31	October 2006	Derrydry Lane, Armagh	NIL	DRD	Road Verge	Adopted Road
32	November 2006	Moyraverty Craigavon	£1	Express Parcels	Area of Encroachment	Industrial area
33	January 2007	Seagoe Portadown	£1	DRD	Road Embankment	Adopted Road
34	March 2007	28 29 32 & 33 Upper Ramone Pk, Portadown	£1 each	McKibben, McFadden, Thornbury & Reid	Areas of Encroachment	Gardens
35	April 2007	31 Upper Ramone Pk Portadown	£1	Mr Coalter	Area of Encroachment	Garden
36	April 2007	Belfast Rd/Fountain Hill Antrim	£1	DRD	Vacant land	Part of Road Junction

	Date	Description	Value	Organisation / Individuals	Previous Use	Current Use
37	April 2007	Larne Rd Ballymena	£1	DRD	Vacant land	Road Verge
38	May 2007	Tullygally Rd Craigavon	£1	DRD	Road Verge	Adopted Road
39	May 2007	35 Upper Ramone Pk Portadown	£1	Mr Knox	Area of encroachment	Garden
40	July 2007	30 & 34 Upper Ramone Pk Portadown	£1	Millar & McCreery	Areas of encroachment	Gardens

Social Housing Development Programme

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how much was paid for the 22 homes in Lurgan purchased directly from the builder.
(AQW 1958/09)

The Minister for Social Development: South Ulster Housing Association recently acquired 22 new homes for the Social Housing Development Programme in Main Street, Lurgan at a total cost of approximately £3.3m. The Department contributed £2.51m in grant-aid towards these homes.

Improvement Schemes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what improvement schemes are planned for the Hannaglen Heights area of West Belfast.
(AQW 1959/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive own 30 properties in the Hannaglen Heights area of West Belfast. These properties were built in 1995. As they were recently built, there are no capital improvement schemes planned.

Multi-Element Improvement Scheme

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Multi-Element Improvement Scheme planned for the Hospital Lane area of Limivady.
(AQW 1964/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Department for Social Development approved the overall strategy for Hospital Lane on Monday 21 July 2008. The strategy will be implemented in three Phases. The Northern Housing Executive approved the detailed scheme design for Phase 1 of 50 dwellings on Wednesday 24 September 2008. The current programmed start date for Phase 1 is August 2009.

Housing Executive

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive schemes were undertaken in the North Down Borough for the year 2008-9.
(AQW 1969/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has seven planned maintenance and improvement schemes for North Down for the year 2008/2009.

Housing Executive

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive schemes in the North Down Borough have been deferred in 2008-9; and how many of these were deferred from previous years.
(AQW 1970/09)

The Minister for Social Development: None of the seven scheduled maintenance and improvement schemes for North Down have been deferred in 2008/2009. However an environmental improvement scheme at Rathhgill 4 & 5 was deferred from 2007/2008 as planning permission was outstanding. This scheme is included in the 2008/2009 schedule.

Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the locations of all Jobs and Benefits Offices.
(AQW 1983/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Social Security Agency currently has 25 Jobs & Benefits offices in the following locations:

Antrim Jobs & Benefits Office	Armagh Jobs & Benefits Office
Castle Street Antrim Co Antrim BT41 4JE	Alexander Road Armagh BT61 7JL

Ballymoney Jobs & Benefits Office 37-45 John Street Ballymoney Co Antrim BT53 6DT	Banbridge Jobs & Benefits Office 18 Castlewellan Road Banbridge Co Down BT32 4AZ
Carrickfergus Jobs & Benefits Office Davy's Street Carrickfergus Co Antrim BT38 8DJ	Coleraine Jobs & Benefits Office Crown Buildings Artillery Road Coleraine BT52 2AA
Dungannon Jobs & Benefits Office Crown Buildings 36 Thomas Street Dungannon Co Tyrone BT70 1EN	Enniskillen Jobs & Benefits Office Queen Elizabeth Road Enniskillen Co Fermanagh BT 74 7JD
Falls Jobs & Benefits Office 19 Falls Road Belfast BT12 4PH	Foyle Jobs & Benefits Office Asylum Road Londonderry BT48 7EA
Hollywood Road Jobs & Benefits Office 106-108 Hollywood Road Belfast BT4 1JU	Kilkeel Jobs & Benefits Office Newry Street Kilkeel Co Down BT34 4DR
Knockbreda Jobs & Benefits Office Upper Knockbreda Road Belfast BT8 6SX	Larne Jobs & Benefits Office 59 Pound Street Larne BT40 1SB
Limavady Jobs & Benefits Office 9 Connell Street Limavady Co Londonderry BT49 0DU	Lisburn Jobs & Benefits Office Bow House 71 Bow Street Lisburn Co Antrim BT28 1BB
Lisnagelvin Jobs & Benefits Office 2 Crescent Road Londonderry BT47 2NJ	Lurgan Jobs & Benefits Office Alexandra Crescent Lurgan Co Armagh BT66 6BB
Magherafelt Jobs & Benefits Office 31 Station Road Magherafelt Co Londonderry BT45 5DJ	Newry Jobs & Benefits Office 40 Bridge Street Newry Co Down BT35 8AJ
Newtownabbey Jobs & Benefits Office 39 Church Road Newtownabbey Co Antrim BT36 7LB	Omagh Jobs & Benefits Office 7 Mountjoy Road Omagh Co Tyrone BT79 7BB

Portadown Jobs & Benefits Office 140 Jervis Street Portadown Co Armagh BT62 1HA	Shaftesbury Square Jobs & Benefits Office Conor Building 107 Great Victoria Street Belfast BT2 7AG
Shankill Jobs & Benefits Office 15-25 Snugville Street Belfast BT13 1PP	

Compensation Recovery Scheme

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Social Development to provide the total figure for the recovery of social security benefits under the Compensation Recovery Scheme, since 2000.

(AQW 2008/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information requested is set out in the table below.

COMPENSATION RECOVERY FROM 2000 - 2008

Year	Benefit Amount Recovered
2000/01	No longer available
2001/02	£5,833,899
2002/03	£7,718,419
2003/04	£7,219,554
2004/05	£6,890,103
2005/06	£7,214,218
2006/07	£7,727,263
2007/08	£7,944,406
2008 to 31/10/08	£3,432,455

Phoenix Gas

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development why residents of Pinetree Manor Fold in West Belfast, who do not use gas in their homes, are paying for meters installed in the property by Phoenix Gas.

(AQW 2011/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Tenants at Pinetree Manor live in self contained flats. Each flat is heated by Phoenix Gas and is individually metered. There is a requirement by Phoenix Gas for all customers to pay for a minimum of 2000 kilowatt/ hours per year, which equates to £133.71 per annum. However, for tenants who have Pay As You Go meters installed, which is common in social housing schemes, there is no charge if there is no consumption of gas.

Phoenix Gas

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions her Department is having with Phoenix Gas to ensure that people living in Folds in West Belfast, who do not use gas in their homes, are not charged for meters installed in their properties. (AQW 2012/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department is not currently engaged in discussions with Phoenix Gas on this issue. If FOLD tenants do not have gas heating then gas meters are not installed in their property.

Strabane Regeneration

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development if she will (i) acknowledge the work carried out by Strabane 2000 in delivering substantial social and physical regeneration initiatives in the town centre and its environs; and (ii) commit to supporting the continued work of the town centre regeneration body. (AQW 2025/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I visited Strabane District Council offices on Wednesday 23 January 2008. As part of that day's events I met with Strabane 2000 to mark its achievements over its initial ten year lifespan. I commend Strabane 2000 as a partnership organisation committed to its founding principles of encouraging the redevelopment of Strabane Town Centre by promoting its social and physical regeneration.

I am happy to commit to supporting the continuing good work of Strabane 2000 through my North West Development Office. I wish to highlight the joint DSD/Strabane District Council sponsorship of the Strabane Town Centre Master Plan in consultation with Strabane 2000, Planning and Roads Services. Work to secure consultancy support to deliver this Master Plan is at an advanced procurement stage and will provide a comprehensive action plan to inform future developments.

Strabane Community Bridge Project

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department's North West Development Office will provide funding towards the Strabane Community Bridge Project. (AQW 2026/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Department has received a written request for funding of the Melvin Bridge element of this project. My officials have sought further information from Strabane District Council. On receipt of this

information, detailed consideration will be given to the question of a contribution from DSD, in line with my commitment to support regeneration efforts in Strabane and subject to normal Departmental priorities and budgetary constraints.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development how many applicants, aged 70 and over and accepted for the Warm Homes Scheme, are currently on the waiting list. (AQW 2027/09)

The Minister for Social Development: In April 2008 I amended the eligibility criteria for the heating element of the Warm Homes Scheme to ensure that householders in greatest need got help first. Since then householders with no central heating, solid fuel, Economy 7 or bottled gas central heating have been treated as priority. 70 such householders have been surveyed and are being allocated to contractors to carry out the heating installations. For these priority cases there is no waiting list.

There are 339 outstanding applications from householders aged over 70 who applied to the scheme prior to April 2008. These householders all have operational oil heating systems which require upgrading to improve their energy efficiency.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development what the average waiting time is for people accepted onto the Warm Homes Scheme who are over the age of 70, and are currently on the waiting list. (AQW 2028/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Since 25 April 2008 when I instructed Eaga to introduce prioritisation measures, all applicants over the age of 70 with no central heating, solid fuel, Economy 7 or bottled gas central heating have had their properties surveyed and are in the process of being allocated to contractors. Once the work has been allocated to a contractor, the waiting time for commencement of work is 6 weeks.

All applicants aged 70 years and over have had their property surveyed. However, these householders have operational oil heating systems which require upgrading to improve their energy efficiency. I will be bidding in December monitoring for extra resources to assist these householders.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timescale involved in bringing forward urgent procedures for her proposals to tackle fuel poverty. (AQW 2108/09)

The Minister for Social Development: In response to rising fuel prices I established the Fuel Poverty Task Force in May 2008. I developed a set of practical proposals from the task force report to help those people most affected by the rise in fuel prices this winter. These proposals were circulated to Ministers as a draft Executive paper. Unfortunately, the Executive has not met so I submitted the Executive paper on fuel poverty to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdfM) on 2 October for clearance to bring forward my proposals under Urgent Procedure. I am not in a position to detail timescales involved as OFMdfM have not yet responded on the matter.

Approval by the Executive is still urgently required if some of the proposals are to be implemented in time for this Winter.

With regard to internet connection speed within Parliament Buildings, the IS Office intends to undertake planned reviews for a range of IT issues. Any significant upgrades will be costed and brought to the Commission for approval. Currently, such reviews are planned for the aging TV Distribution system, the NI Assembly website and the speed of internet access from Parliament Buildings.

ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Broadband Service for Members

Ms J McCann asked the Assembly Commission what steps it is taking to improve broadband service for Members, particularly during lunchtime. (AQW 1924/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Rev Dr R Coulter): In May 2007 as part of the project to replace the obsolete IT Equipment in use by Members and Secretariat staff a contract was awarded to BT for the provision for a centrally funded Broadband service for Members. The contract provided for a BT "Broadband Business Option 3" Internet connection providing up to 6Mbps to be supplied to each Member's office. To date 60 Members have availed of the service whilst others have an alternative business arrangement in place.

To date any complaints lodged with the Information Systems Office, who manage the contact on behalf of the NI Assembly Commission, have been limited to difficulties in getting the service installed or with co-ordinating a move to another location. The contract is reviewed on a regular basis and at the last contract review meeting, held on Thursday 30th October; BT announced a price reduction for the current service.

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