
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 9 January 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Efficiency Savings

Dr Farry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what (i) policies; and (ii) practices in its Department have been changed by delivering the 3% efficiency savings required under the Budget 2008-11. (AQW 3541/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has made the following policy changes in the delivery of the Department's 3% efficiency savings:

- The Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment (ACII) was disbanded at the end of its last term of appointment on 31 December 2007; and
- the Department will reduce the use of external consultants and external research costs.

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has made the following changes to Departmental business practices in the delivery of the Department's 3% efficiency savings:

- Critical review and control of discretionary administration cost spend, including travel and subsistence costs;
- the introduction of improved business processes across the Department, including the restructuring and/or merger of some business units;
- review of accommodation requirements; and
- examination and rationalisation of the back-office functions of the Department's sponsored bodies, and the investigation of opportunities to share common services with other government sponsored bodies.

The Department will continue to review its policies and business practices as part of its ongoing commitment to efficiency and value for money in the use of public resources, and the achievement of the efficiency targets set out in Budget 2008-11.

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Road Racing

Mr Poots asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what contribution road racing makes to the economy and the tourism industry. (AQW 3367/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): I am aware that this Question was due for Answer on 22 December 2007 and I apologise to the Member for the delay.

Road racing, through major international events such as the North West 200 and the Ulster Grand Prix, makes a considerable contribution to the economy and tourism industry here both in terms of attracting visitors that may not otherwise have come to Northern Ireland and raising our international profile as a venue for world class events.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) recognises the importance of such unique road racing events and promotes these on its consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com. Both NITB and Tourism Ireland feature links to the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland website www.realroadracing.com, which is the governing body of motor cycle sports and responsible for the promotion of the sport.

Irish Football Association

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much the Irish Football Association made from fines collected from junior football clubs last season; and how much they anticipate collecting this season. (AQW 3679/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for matters relating to fines collected from junior football clubs and where the profits from this process go rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sport, the Irish Football Association (IFA). Requests for information on these matters should be directed to the IFA.

Irish Football Association

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail to where the profits from the increased fines collected by the Irish Football Association from junior football clubs are going. (AQW 3680/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for matters relating to fines collected from junior football clubs and where the profits from this process go rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sport, the Irish Football Association (IFA). Requests for information on these matters should be directed to the IFA.

Irish Football Association

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action he intends to take in the face of the high increase in fines levied against junior football clubs by the Irish Football Association. (AQW 3681/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for matters relating to fines collected from junior football clubs and where the profits from this process go rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of the sport, the Irish Football Association (IFA). Requests for information on these matters should be directed to the IFA.

Interdepartmental Charter Group

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when was the Interdepartmental Charter Group set up and what are its terms of reference. (AQW 3774/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Interdepartmental Charter Group was set up by the Permanent Secretaries Group and the first meeting of the Group took place in February 2001.

The terms of reference for the Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group are:

- To oversee and monitor the implementation of the Charter by Government Departments in Northern Ireland;
- To prepare periodic reports for the Committee of Experts (COMEX) of the Council of Europe;
- To develop guidance to Northern Ireland Departments (and Whitehall Departments that operate in Northern Ireland) as necessary; and
- To advise Departments on the possible resource implications of Charter implementation issues.

EDUCATION

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how much was paid to recruitment agencies for teaching and non-teaching staff in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, in each of the last two years. (AQW 3324/09)

The Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Seo a leanas an méid a íocadh le gníomhaireachtaí earcaíochta fá choinne foirne múinteoireachta agus neamh-mhúinteoireachta i mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt (SEELB), i ngach bliain le dhá bhliain airgeadais anuas:

The amount paid to recruitment agencies for teaching and non teaching staff in the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB), in each of the last two financial years, are as follows:

	2006-07	2007-08
Teaching Staff	£136,843	£67,896
Non Teaching Staff	£430,436	£443,402
Total	£567,279	£511,298

Additional Fuel Costs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the impact of additional fuel costs on (i) schools; and (ii) Education and Library Boards, in this financial year. (AQW 3442/09)

The Minister of Education: B'éigean éifeacht na gcostas breise breosla ar scoileanna agus ar bhoird oideachais agus leabharlainne sa bhliain airgeadais seo a bhainistiú laistigh d'acmhainní reatha.

The impact of the additional fuel costs on schools and education and library boards in this financial year has had to be managed from within existing resources. I have sought additional funding in each of the In-Year Monitoring rounds to alleviate the unprecedented increases, however, no additional resources have been made available. As a consequence of the significant increases in costs, schools and education and library boards have had to reprioritise their activities to absorb these costs in the short-term.

Whilst there have been some reductions in the cost of fuel, particularly in relation to oil, unless there are further decreases, it will not be possible for schools and education and library boards to continue to absorb these costs without an impact on front line services. As part of the Executive's Strategic Stocktake, I have highlighted this issue and sought additional resources to protect the delivery of educational services and will continue to do so.

European Charter on Minority Languages

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Education to demonstrate how her Department and its arms length bodies, have applied, in practice, the European Charter on Minority Languages in relation to the Irish language. (AQW 3461/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá **Cairt na hEorpa** do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh curtha i bhfeidhm ag an Roinn Oideachais i dtaca leis an Ghaeilge de, tríd na bearta seo a leanas:-

The Department of Education has applied the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in relation to the Irish language through the following activities:-

- Letters received in Irish are replied to in Irish;
- Irish is included in my Department's letter head;
- Telephone calls and meetings in Irish are facilitated;
- Consultation documents and school circulars are issued in Irish and English;
- Irish versions of documents, such as those above, are available on the Department's website;
- Irish is incorporated into my answers to Assembly questions, speeches and Assembly statements and is frequently used in press releases;

- Internal guidance on complying with the Charter and a Code of Courtesy on Irish are available to assist staff.

This year my Department appointed two Irish Language Officers. As part of their role these officers carry out many of the tasks listed above, particularly the provision of urgent translations and facilitation of the use of Irish in telephone calls and at meetings or other events. Indeed, they are attending the current series of consultation events relating to the report on the Review of Irish medium Education.

With regard to facilitating Irish medium education, Irish-medium pre-school settings are eligible for funding in the same way as other voluntary and private pre-school playgroups. 521 places were funded including 104 places in the statutory sector in 2007/08.

The Department has approved grant-aided status for 23 Irish-medium schools. In addition there are 11 funded Irish-medium units attached to English medium schools. In 2007/08 there were 2,878 pupils in funded Irish-medium education.

The Department of Education provides core funding to Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, the Irish-medium Education Council. One of its roles is to provide advice, assistance and information to groups setting up schools and units.

In addition, the Department has provided significant funding to Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, the Irish-medium Education Trust-fund, for the purpose of developing and supporting Irish-medium pre-school provision.

The statutory revised curriculum provides opportunities for teaching Irish language, literature, culture and history through areas such as Language & Literacy, Environment & Society and the new strand of Citizenship Education, where young people will be able to explore cultural identity, heritage and diversity.

In the 2007/08 school year I introduced a Primary Languages Programme to provide support for those primary schools who wish to introduce teaching of certain modern languages, including Irish. In addition, within the provisions of the statutory curriculum, schools can choose to make provision for the teaching of Irish at Key Stage 3.

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) now has an increased Irish translation facility and provides curriculum support, examination and assessment materials in Irish. CCEA is specifically providing translated materials to support Irish-medium schools in the roll-out of the revised curriculum.

My Department is awaiting recommendations from the joint Queen's University-University of Ulster Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies on a strategic approach to language learning at all levels for the north of Ireland. This will address language learning at primary and post-primary for a range of languages, including Irish.

Interface Violence

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the programmes her Department funds, in relation to direct intervention and prevention of interface violence; and (ii) the cost of these programmes. (AQW 3483/09)

The Minister of Education: Níl mo Roinn ag tabhairt cistiú d'aon chlár tacaíochta ó thaobh scoileanna atá lonnaithe cois líne síochána de.

My Department is no longer funding any school interface support programmes.

The last Interface School Support Programme ended in March 2008 and was always intended to be a short-term measure, to assist a very small number of the worst affected schools to operate in the midst of community conflict in certain areas of Belfast.

My Department continues to foster and promote better educational opportunities for all our young people, in accordance with its budget priorities.

Through the Department's Extended Schools programme schools can become the hubs of their local communities offering a range of activities beyond the traditional school day engaging with their local community, connecting local people with local services. Extended Schools can make a significant contribution to reducing differentials and improving the quality of life for children and young people particularly from disadvantaged and deprived areas and can build still further on what has been achieved by securing the active engagement of their communities.

Interface Violence

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Education to detail the programmes her Department is carrying out in relation to the prevention of interface violence in (i) primary schools; (ii) post primary schools, in Belfast and what plans does her Department have to introduce such programmes if none exist. (AQW 3484/09)

The Minister of Education: Níl mo Roinn ag tabhairt cistiú d'aon chlár tacaíochta ó thaobh scoileanna atá lonnaithe cois líne síochána de.

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Catholic Maintained Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what steps she is taking to ensure the removal of the requirement to hold a Catholic certificate to teach in Catholic maintained schools. (AQW 3491/09)

The Minister of Education: The recruitment of teachers is exempt from the provisions of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Any changes to this legislation would be a matter for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Tá beartaithe agam athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar dheiseanna earcaíochta anois agus san am atá romhainn in earnáil na Múinteoireachta.

I have decided to conduct a review of current and future recruitment opportunities in the Teaching sector. The review will be conducted by my officials working closely with, and involving, key stakeholders. The review will be completed by January 2010.

Community and Volunteer Playgroups

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what support is available for community and volunteer playgroups that need to employ a translator to meet the needs of children for whom English is not their first language. (AQW 3503/09)

The Minister of Education: Tháinig méadú de 45% ar líon na ndaltaí ó thíortha eile inár scoileanna idir 2006 agus 2007 agus faoi mhí Dheireadh Fómhair 2007, bhí 5665 dalta ó thíortha eile inár mbunscoileanna, inár n-iarbhunscoileanna agus inár scoileanna speisialta.

The number of newcomer pupils in our schools increased by 45% between 2006 and 2007 and by October 2007 there were 5665 newcomer pupils in our primary, post primary and special schools. My Department does not collect data on newcomer children in pre-school provision. However, there are currently 112 newcomer children in government funded nursery schools and nursery classes within primary schools.

Playgroups need to communicate with newcomer parents and to do this they will wish to have key documents translated into various languages.

The priority for my Department has been to provide services to schools with newcomer pupils. It is for this reason that the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) was set up as a regional service within the Education and Library Boards in April 2007, to strengthen and improve support to newcomer pupils and their parents, primarily working through schools. Part of its responsibilities include such services as interpreting and translating, an

information website for newcomer parents and the provision of advice and guidance to schools via locally based Diversity Coordinators.

Due to the very rapid increase in the number of newcomer pupils, IDS has had to concentrate on the primary and the post primary sectors, as it is recognised that the needs of newcomer pupils are greater the older they are when entering the education system.

IDS provide an interpreting service to Department funded nursery schools and units for the following purposes: initial parent/teacher interviews; parent consultation interviews; critical incidents; and pastoral care issues. This service involves the provision of interpreters and is paid for by IDS.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to provide direct support to community and voluntary playgroups, but a number of services which are accessible via the web, may be of some help to such groups.

Within the past year IDS has offered a translation of documents service, and access to many of these documents is now provided via a website. Schools have access to 10 generic school policies and a number of key letters translated into 15 languages for issue to parents in their own language. Whilst IDS is unable to fund interpreting and translation services for private and voluntary pre-school playgroups, I would encourage playgroups to utilise these generic documents, available on the following website www.education-support.org.uk, for example letters which concern parent/teacher meetings.

The Education Support website includes information about our education system in the north and community and volunteer playgroups could direct newcomer parents to the website as it will be of interest to them.

As part of the funding provided via the Common Funding Formula, schools receive an additional monetary payment for each full-time newcomer pupil in a nursery school/class. In 2008/09 this equates to £983 per pupil. Schools receive £491, again for 2008/09, for each part-time newcomer pupil in a nursery school/class. This funding is available only to government funded nursery schools and nursery classes within primary schools.

Portadown College

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to the answer to AQW 2841/09, when her Department received the submission to the revised appraisal for Portadown College. (AQW 3515/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlaine an Deiscirt (SELB) breac-chuntas ar na hathruithe molta a bhain leis na bunscéimeanna caipitil formheasta fá choinne Lurgan College agus Portadown College do mo Roinn i mí Mheithimh agus i mí Aibreáin faoi seach.

Proposed changes to the original approved capital schemes for Lurgan and Portadown Colleges were outlined to my Department by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) in June and April 2007 respectively. The SELB advised that the Board and Lurgan College had decided it was important to retain a link with the existing listed building. In regard to Portadown College a new internal road layout meant that the capital scheme needed to be revisited. The changes as proposed necessitated revisions to the appraisals which were undertaken by the SELB. The Board and the department have been in contact on the work on both projects on a number of occasions. The latest revisions were received on 24 November 2008 for Portadown College and 10 November 2008 for Lurgan College. The appraisals need to be approved by the Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel. Subject to the appraisals satisfying the requirements it is anticipated that both schemes would be approved shortly.

Lurgan College Scheme

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to the answer to AQW 2841/09, when she anticipates approving the revised Lurgan College scheme. (AQW 3516/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlaine an Deiscirt (SELB) breac-chuntas ar na hathruithe molta a bhain leis na bunscéimeanna caipitil formheasta fá choinne Lurgan College agus Portadown College do mo Roinn i mí Mheithimh agus i mí Aibreáin faoi seach.

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Portadown College

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to the answer to AQW 2841/09, when she anticipates approving the revised Portadown College scheme. (AQW 3517/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt (SELB) breac-chuntas ar na hathruithe molta a bhain leis na bunscéimeanna caipitil formheasta fá choinne Lurgan College agus Portadown College do mo Roinn i mí Mheithimh agus i mí Aibreáin faoi seach.

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Lurgan College Scheme

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 2841/09, for the reasons given by the Southern Education and Library Board for submitting the original Lurgan College scheme in a form that required revision. (AQW 3565/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt (SELB) breac-chuntas ar na hathruithe molta a bhain leis na bunscéimeanna caipitil formheasta fá choinne Lurgan College agus Portadown College do mo Roinn i mí Mheithimh agus i mí Aibreáin faoi seach.

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Portadown College

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 2841/09, for the reasons given by the Southern Education and Library Board for submitting the original Portadown College scheme in a form that required revision. (AQW 3566/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt (SELB) breac-chuntas ar na hathruithe molta a bhain leis na bunscéimeanna caipitil formheasta fá choinne Lurgan College agus Portadown College do mo Roinn i mí Mheithimh agus i mí Aibreáin faoi seach.

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to be revisited. The changes as proposed necessitated revisions to the appraisals which were undertaken by the SELB. The Board and the department have been in contact on the work on both projects on a number of occasions. The latest revisions were received on 24 November 2008 for Portadown College and 10 November 2008 for Lurgan College. The appraisals need to be approved by the Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel. Subject to the appraisals satisfying the requirements it is anticipated that both schemes would be approved shortly.

Controlled Schools Estate

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education what plans she has for the future of the controlled schools estate in the Craigavon area. (AQW 3588/09)

The Minister of Education: Is ábhar a bhaineann le Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt é planáil eastáit na scoileanna rialaithe i gceantair Craigavon.

The planning of the controlled schools estate in the Craigavon area is a matter for the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) in the first instance.

The SELB has advised that capital schemes are progressing for Portadown College and Lurgan College. The Board has also projects for King's Park and Hart Memorial Primary Schools at the appraisal stage. The Board has advised that discussions are ongoing with a variety of parties on the further development of the controlled schools' estate in the area.

Ulster-Scots Language

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Education what action her Department is taking to carry out the obligations of Part 2 of the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in relation to the Ulster-Scots language. (AQW 3622/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá Cuid II de Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh curtha i bhfeidhm ag an Roinn Oideachais i dtaca le hAlbainis-Uladh de, tríd na gealltanais seo a leanas:-

The Department of Education has applied Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages in relation to the Ulster-Scots language through the following commitments:-

- Letters received in Ulster-Scots are replied to in Ulster-Scots;
- Ulster-Scots is included in my Department's letter head;
- Telephone calls and meetings in Ulster-Scots can be facilitated.

The Department of Education also supports the implementation of Part II of the Charter in respect of the Ulster-Scots language through provision within the statutory revised curriculum, which is being introduced on a phased basis from September 2007 to June 2010. The revised curriculum provides opportunities for teaching Ulster-Scots literature, culture and history through areas such as Language & Literacy, Environment & Society and the new strand of Citizenship Education, where young people will be able to explore cultural identity, heritage and diversity.

The Department has provided funding for the production of Ulster-Scots primary resource materials, which were made available in December 2007. It has also committed to providing similar support in relation to post-primary materials on their completion and is awaiting engagement in relation to this with the Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group.

The Department is awaiting recommendations from the joint Queen's University-University of Ulster Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies on a strategic approach to language learning at all levels for the north of Ireland.

Devenish College in County Fermanagh

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education, following recent remarks from her Department that some capital projects may have to 'slow down or temporarily halt', what impact this course of action, if implemented, will have on the proposed new build for Devenish College in County Fermanagh. (AQW 3647/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá athbhreithniú déanta ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Iarthair ar sholáthar iarbhunscolaíochta rialaithe agus deonacha i bhFear Manach agus an cuspóir acu go mbeidh soláthar inbhuanaithe ann le riachtanais oideachasúla na toadhcháí a chomhlíonadh.

The Western Education and Library Board has undertaken a review of controlled and voluntary post primary provision in Fermanagh with the objective of having sustainable provision to meet future educational needs. There is a need for new accommodation for Devenish College and the building project will move forward informed by an agreed strategic approach to future development for the area, and the Board's feasibility study on site options for the College.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Survey of 16-25 Year Olds

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to address the findings of the survey of 16-25 year olds, by the Prince's Trust, that suggests this group feels they have minimum contribution to make to society, especially those not in education, work or training. (AQW 3690/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): I am aware of the survey undertaken by the Prince's Trust.

As you are aware there was a debate in the Assembly on 18 November about young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and I committed to take the lead in a scoping study to research further data on the NEET group in Northern Ireland, to identify the relevant actions currently in place across all departments and to recommend whether a cross departmental strategy could achieve better outcomes for this group of young people.

The information from the Prince's Trust survey will be used to inform the study.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) why the Education Maintenance Allowance was not paid for the first school term of 2008/9 to the South Eastern Regional College; and (ii) when it will be paid. (AQW 3739/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payments are made to individual students. My officials have contacted the EMA Customer Services team which has confirmed that EMA payments have been paid to a substantial number of students in the first school term of academic year 2008/09. These include payments to students where applications had been approved and attendance confirmed for the first week in the academic year for the three campuses within the South Eastern Regional College as follows:

- Lisburn campus - 223 students;
- East Down campus - 160 students; and
- North Down and Ards campus – 386 students.

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Invest NI

Mr Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of financial assistance provided by Invest NI towards (i) business start-up; (ii) business expansion; and (iii) inward investment projects, in the Strabane District Council area, in the last five years, compared to the overall amount that had been applied for during this period. (AQW 3667/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Although the request relates to the last 5 years, information on assistance provided within the Strabane District Council area is more readily available for the 6 year period since the inception of Invest NI. Details are therefore provided as follows:

- (i) **Business Start Up Projects:** Invest NI made 439 offers to support the formation of new businesses in the Strabane District Council area over the last six years.
- (ii) **Business Expansion Projects:** Invest NI made 54 offers to existing locally-owned businesses in the Strabane District Council area through a range of schemes and programmes to help expand their operations. In addition, Invest NI also offered support to 123 specific business innovation activities (12 externally-owned and 111 locally-owned) including research and development, trade development, training, and technology and process development projects.
- (iii) **Inward Investment Projects:** Support was offered to 9 inward investment projects in the Strabane District Council area, including 3 new and 6 reinvestment projects.

Unfortunately, no comparison can be made with the overall amount of assistance applied for as such figures do not exist. This is because Invest NI's client companies do not apply for a pre-determined level of financial assistance in relation to their investment projects. The agency requires clients to prepare comprehensive business plans in relation to investment proposals and these must meet its strict intervention criteria. Invest NI then negotiates and agrees bespoke financial assistance packages individually with the companies concerned with the aim of offering the minimum funding necessary to enable a project to proceed at a given location and within a pre-determined timeframe.

ENVIRONMENT

District Electoral Area Commissioner for Local Government

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what discussions have been held with the Northern Ireland Office about the timescale for the proposed work programme of the District Electoral Area Commissioner for Local Government; and (ii) what other information has emerged from these discussions. (AQW 3443/09)

The Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): I have had no discussions with the Northern Ireland Office about the timescale for the proposed work programme of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner.

My predecessor, Arlene Foster, wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 6 May 2008, informing him of her intention to appoint a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner in early July, and indicating that it would be helpful if a District Electoral Areas Commissioner could be appointed at the earliest opportunity.

The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner was appointed on 1 July 2008, and is due to submit the report on his final recommendations for local government wards and districts on 30 June 2009. In autumn 2009, I will lay the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner's Report before the Assembly, together with draft subordinate legislation giving effect to the recommendations in the report.

The task of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner is to review and make recommendations for grouping together the wards drawn up by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner into district electoral areas for the purpose of holding local government elections.

The District Electoral Areas Commissioner (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Order 2007 provides for the appointment of a District Electoral Areas Commissioner as soon as practicable after the appointment of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

Peace III Allocation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what legal powers allow local councils to distribute or spend money allocated to council clusters as part of the Peace III allocation. (AQW 3511/09)

The Minister of the Environment:The PEACE III Programme is a source of funding. It is not an activity in itself. The legal powers for the involvement of local government in PEACE III derive from local government's general legislative remit, notably the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Recruitment Services

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff were employed in the delivery of recruitment services and human resource services at the start of the 2008-09 financial year; and to detail the number of staff, broken down by grade, that are required by his Department to deliver retained services over the period of the eHR contract. (AQW 3095/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds):

- (i) The number of staff employed in the delivery of recruitment services and human resource services at the start of the 2008-09 financial year is listed below:

Personnel: 66.79 (Full time equivalents) to deliver a departmental service to DFP.

Recruitment Policy & Marketing Branch: 11.65 (Full time equivalents) to deliver a service to the whole of the NICS.

- (ii) The number of staff, broken down by grade, that are required by his Department to deliver retained services over the period of the eHR contract is:

Personnel: 27.25 (Full time equivalents) – Delivering a retained departmental service to DFP.

Grade Full Time (Equivalents)								
G5	G7	DP	SO	EO1	EO11	AO	AA	Total
0.85	1.55	2.20	2.88	2.52	4.70	8.12	4.43	27.25

Recruitment Policy & Marketing Branch: 6 (Full time equivalents) – Delivering a retained service to the whole of the NICS.

Grade Full Time (Equivalents)					
G7	DP	SO	EO1	AA	Total
1	1	1	2	1	6

Welfare Support Service: 23.5 (Full time equivalents) - Delivering a retained service to the whole of the NICS.

Grade Full Time (Equivalents)					
DP	SO	EO1	AO	AO Vacancy	Total
1	2	17.5	2.5	0.5	23.5

Consultants Employed by Departments

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide details, including costs, of all consultants employed by Departments and their agencies, in the last financial year. (AQW 3160/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel:The information, including costs of all consultants employed by Departments and their agencies in the last financial year have been provided by departments in annual returns to DFP. Tables setting out the information have been placed in the library.

Wood Chip Energy Production

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much wood chip energy production will be used by Departments over the next five years. (AQW 3265/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The amount of wood chip energy production that is proposed to be used by Departments over the next five years is shown below.

	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Wood chip	400	600	600	600	600	600
Wood pellet	0	144.5	344.5	464.5	464.5	464.5

Note:- All amounts are in metric tonnes.

European Charter on Minority Languages

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to demonstrate how his Department and its arms length bodies, have applied, in practice, the European Charter on Minority Languages in relation to the Irish language. (AQW 3462/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: My Department has recently provided input to the 3rd UK report on the implementation of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

This report, detailing the actions which Departments have taken to fulfil their obligations under the Charter, will be presented to the Executive for approval as soon as possible.

Empty Properties

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration is being given to deferring the introduction of the rating of empty properties in light of the economic downturn and its effects upon the property market. (AQW 3635/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: I recently announced my decision to introduce the rating of empty homes, at 100% liability, from April 2010. I believe this will encourage people to live in homes that are lying empty. It will also raise additional revenue for the Assembly and local councils to help fund public services. However, I am all too aware of the downturn in the property market and if it has not recovered by early 2010 I will consider delaying the introduction of the measure.

You will be aware that the rating of empty commercial property has been in place since April 2004.

Lone Pensioner Allowance Scheme

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many applications have been received for the lone pensioner allowance scheme, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 3660/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: A break down of the number of applications for the Lone Pensioner Allowance Scheme received by Land & Property Services, broken down by district council area, is set out in the attached table. Land & Property Services records information on applications received by district council area, and therefore information is not available by parliamentary constituency.

Council Area	No of Applications Received
Antrim	397
Ards	889
Armagh	514
Ballymena	684

Council Area	No of Applications Received
Ballymoney	239
Banbridge	332
Belfast	3,240
Carrickfergus	469
Castlereagh	1,227
Coleraine	736
Cookstown	189
Craigavon	634
Derry	574
Down	636
Dungannon & South Tyrone	321
Fermanagh	539
Larne	398
Limavady	176
Lisburn	1,165
Magherafelt	212
Moyle	171
Newry & Mourne	599
Newtownabbey	1,034
North Down	1,506
Omagh	358
Strabane	197
Total	17,436

Dormant Bank Accounts

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he will bring forward the necessary measures to use the money from dormant bank accounts to alleviate the financial difficulties facing people in the community. (AQW 3677/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Under the terms of the current legislation, the Scheme provides a general definition of “social or environmental purposes” on which the unclaimed assets may be spent. I believe that it is important that all interested parties should have the opportunity to be involved in the setting of local priorities for the distribution of funds currently locked in dormant bank and building society accounts for the benefit of the community.

Therefore, subject to Executive agreement, I am proposing the launch of a 12 week consultation on the Dormant Accounts Scheme during February.

Dormant Bank Accounts

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he is aware of the Dormant Bank and Building Society Act 2008; and to outline how much money will be made available to target the need for youth facilities in the most deprived areas. (AQW 3683/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: On the 27 November 2007, the Assembly passed a Legislative Consent Motion agreeing that the provisions in the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Bill relating to the distribution in Northern Ireland of sums released from dormant bank and building society accounts should be considered by the UK Parliament. The Dormant Bank and Building Society Act 2008 received Royal Assent on 26 November 2008.

Under the terms of the current legislation, the Scheme provides a general definition of “social or environmental purposes” on which the unclaimed assets may be spent. I believe that it is important that all interested parties should have the opportunity to be involved in the setting of local priorities for the distribution of funds currently locked in dormant bank and building society accounts for the benefit of the community.

Therefore, subject to Executive agreement, I am proposing the launch of a 12 week consultation on the Dormant Accounts Scheme during February.

Dormant Bank Accounts

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how much; (ii) when; and (iii) how, money from the Dormant Bank and Building Society Act 2008 will be made available. (AQW 3684/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: At present it is estimated the Northern Ireland share for investment will be between £10-20 million in the first year and then tail off rapidly in future years with estimates of a few hundreds of thousands per year thereafter.

It will be mid 2009 before the Dormant Accounts Scheme will be launched and funds from identified dormant accounts will begin to be transferred to the Reclaim Fund.

It will be early 2010 before the funds are transferred from the Reclaim Fund to BIG Lottery Fund for distribution through the Dormant Accounts Scheme. The Dormant Accounts Scheme will be a separate and distinct funding stream from lottery funding with its own branding.

Civil Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for the number of (i) internal; and (ii) external, appointments made at senior Civil Service level to the Northern Ireland Civil Service, in each of the last five financial years. (AQW 3306/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number of (i) internal, and (ii) external, appointments made at Senior Civil Service level to the Northern Ireland Civil Service in each of the last five financial years is shown on the attached table.

HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Bonus Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the cost of any bonuses that were paid to consultants or senior officials at (i) Departmental level; (ii) Board level; and (iii) Trust level, in the last three years. (AQW 2987/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): It should be noted that the number and rate of bonus payments which can be paid to senior officials in DHSSPS and in all NI Departments is set by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Department has no discretion to change the number and the rate of bonus payments made.

The most up to date figures that are currently available are at:

- (i) Departmental level for 2005/06 – a total of £118,520 paid to 25 staff, 2006/07 – a total of £156,000 paid to 24 staff and 2007/08 – a total of £180,000 paid to 25 staff.

- (ii) Board level for 2006/07 - £nil, 2007/08 - £nil, 2008/09 - £nil, and
 (iii) Trust level for 2006/07 - £36,214, 2007/08* - £24,894, 2008/09* - £9,894. The figures at Trust level include payments to senior officials in former legacy trust organisations in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

* 2007/08 Belfast Trust has not yet agreed its awards

* 2008/09 Western Trust and Belfast Trust have not yet agreed their awards

Water Supply

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if the fire officers who attended the fire outbreak at Lisieux Avenue, in Warrenpoint on Sunday 30 November 2008, experienced any difficulties with the water supply from the nearest fire hydrant. (AQW 3207/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I understand that the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service experienced no difficulties with the water supply from the nearest fire hydrant when attending the fire at Lisieux Avenue.

Money Spent on Art

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount of money spent on art for the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3208/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The amount of spending on art by each Health and Social Care Trust in the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2008 is as follows:

Health and Social Care Trust	Capital	Revenue
Belfast	£211,000	£197,000
Northern	£55,000	0
Southern	£29,300	£29,400
South Eastern	£278,000	0
Western	£190,000	£17,000

Telephone Communication Masts

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total revenue generated through his Department leasing its land or property to facilitate the erection of telephone communication masts. (AQW 3243/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: None.

My Department has not leased any land or property in its ownership for the erection of telephone communications masts.

Ravara House in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the savings to be made through the proposed closure of Ravara House, Bangor. (AQW 3333/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Full public consultation, which is running from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009, is currently ongoing on the South Eastern Trust's proposals and therefore it is not yet decided whether this establishment will close, or how precisely services would be reconfigured. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. It is therefore not possible to make a reliable estimate of the savings to be achieved from this specific site at the present time.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the savings to be made through the reduction of the use of (i) agency staff; (ii) locums; and (iii) bank staff, by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3335/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have asked all Trusts to reduce reliance upon temporary staff and absence management and productivity targets have been put in place. A full assessment of the anticipated savings cannot be made until the consultation process on the efficiency proposals is complete.

Child Protection Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department has taken to ensure lessons are learned from the failures of the 'baby P' case in England. (AQW 3374/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My staff are considering this case very carefully to see if there are any lessons which can be learned to improve further child protection services in Northern Ireland. My officials are currently seeking an update from Trusts on current compliance with Laming recommendations. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) RQIA will as part of their review of child protection services within HSC Trusts and HSS Boards also consider Trust compliance with Laming recommendations. The RQIA, will also consider what good practice has been successfully achieved in safeguarding children since the Climbié Report, along with key features of good practice and whether these are universally applied in relation to effective implementation of safeguarding systems and procedures. RQIA has also been asked to report on interagency working, development and deployment of professional workforce capacity and effective systems of public accountability.

In addition, we have invested heavily in child protection services and family support. This includes a reform of front line child protection services which involves the introduction of a uniform assessment model to be used by professionals when assessing the needs of individual children and their families. We have also reviewed child protection structures and established Gateway Teams within each of the HSC Trusts to deal with child protection cases. Measures have been taken to improve supervision, recording and information exchange within child protection services in HSC Trusts and we have also invested heavily to improve Trust IT facilities.

Work is underway to establish an independently-chaired regional statutory Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland which will make arrangements here amongst the strongest, robust and effective anywhere in the world. The new Safeguarding Board will, for example, include a duty on relevant agencies to co-operate to safeguard children.

Bamford Review

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to have the recommendations in the Bamford Review actioned for existing services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3379/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Reviews of adult mental health services in the Western Trust area in recent years will lead to a significant move away from inpatient care towards a range of alternative community based services, in line with the Bamford vision. The Trust is redesigning its community mental health team service to provide more specialised services to include primary care liaison, home treatment, rehabilitation and recovery, psychological therapies and acute day care services.

As a result of the shift to community based services, the Trust is planning to replace existing mental health inpatient facilities with two new inpatient facilities, one at Gransha due for completion by 2011 and the other at the new Omagh hospital site, due for completion in 2014.

Other mental health service developments being funded over the current and next two years are personality disorder services and advocacy and support partnerships with service users and their carers. Work to resettle long stay inpatients continues.

Within learning disability services, resettlement of long stay inpatients and tackling delayed discharges from hospital are priorities. Additional investment is also being directed towards crisis intervention services, day services, respite, advocacy and domiciliary care.

People Registered as Blind

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to the answer to AQW 2705/09, to detail the number of registrations in each of the two categories, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last two years. (AQW 3386/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Pursuant to my answer to AQW 2705/09, information on the number of registrations in each of the two categories; (i) blind; and (ii) partially sighted, is not collected centrally, but is recorded by each Health & Social Care. The information provided by the five HSC Trusts is detailed in the table below.

NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS OF PERSONS BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED IN HSC TRUSTS (31 MARCH 2008)

HSC Trust	(i) Blind Persons		(ii) Partially Sighted Persons	
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2006/2007	2007/2008
Belfast HSC Trust	66	57	31	25
Northern HSC Trust	123	91	39	41
South Eastern HSC Trust	52	50	23	21
Southern HSC Trust	29	27	13	10
Western HSC Trust	25	35	23	13
Northern Ireland	295	260	129	110

Special Advisors

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many special advisors he has. (AQW 3400/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have one special advisor.

Antrim Area Hospital

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were admitted to the Accident and Emergency Department in the Antrim area, in each of the last five years. (AQW 3452/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of attendances at the Accident and Emergency Department at Antrim Area Hospital, for each of the last five years, is outlined below.

Year	Attendances at Antrim Area Hospital Accident & Emergency Department		
	First	Follow Up	Total
2003-04	50,417	1,716	52,133
2004-05	50,704	1,838	52,542
2005-06	52,591	1,479	54,070
2006-07	55,940	1,462	57,402
2007-08	57,944	3,344	61,288

Source: Departmental Return KH09 (Part 2)

Efficiency Savings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to breakdown the money saved for each area of efficiency savings for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3489/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the latest figures available, as at 30th September Belfast Trust had achieved £5.45m of efficiency savings in the following areas:

	Reform of Public Administration	Productivity	Total
£m	3.20	2.25	5.45

Efficiency Savings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to breakdown the money saved for each area of efficiency savings for the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3490/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the latest figures available, as at 30th September Southern Trust had achieved £1.5m of efficiency savings in the following areas:

	Reform of Public Administration	Income generation	Productivity	Service re-engineering	Regional initiatives	Total
£m	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.5

Efficiency Savings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to breakdown the money saved for each area of efficiency savings for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3492/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the latest figures available, as at 30th September South Eastern Trust had achieved £4.1m of efficiency savings in the following areas:

	Reform of Public Administration	Income generation	Productivity	Service re-engineering	Regional initiatives	Total
£m	1.5	0.1	1.7	0.8	0.0	4.1

Efficiency Savings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to breakdown the money saved for each area of efficiency savings for the western Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3493/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the latest figures available, as at 30th September Western Trust had achieved £3.3m of efficiency savings in the following areas:

	Reform of Public Administration	Productivity	Service re-engineering	Regional initiatives	Total
£m	1.2	1.3	0.6	0.2	3.3

Ravara House in Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when looking at the potential closure of Ravara House in Bangor, what consideration will be given to the views of (i) residents of the home; (ii) elected representatives; and (iii) local residents before a decision is made. (AQW 3508/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The proposals for the future of Ravara House in Bangor are now subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is a full public consultation period, which has been running from November 20th 2008 and continues until February 12th 2009. The South Eastern

Trust are making significant efforts to engage with all interested parties through a series of meetings with residents in Ravara and their families. A public meeting is scheduled for Monday 12th January at 7pm in the Marine Court Hotel in Bangor. The Trust also proposes to engage with all political parties, elected representatives and North Down District Council during the consultation period. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the public consultation.

Ravara House in Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if a final decision has been made about the closure of Ravara House in Bangor. (AQW 3509/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I can confirm that no final decision has been made on the closure of Ravara House in Bangor. The proposals are now subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is a full public consultation period, which has been running from November 20th 2008 and continues until February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the public consultation.

European Charter on Minority Languages

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to demonstrate how his Department and its arms length bodies have applied, in practice, the European Charter on Minority Languages in relation to the Irish language. (AQW 3519/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department and its arms length bodies discharge their obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in relation to the Irish Language in the following ways:

- The translation of publications into Irish on request
- The acceptance of correspondence in Irish and response in Irish
- The facility for interviews and meetings to take place with interpretation in Irish on the receipt of sufficient advance notice
- The publication of health protection and promotion information leaflets in Irish on the public health pages of the Department's website
- The publication of school health forms and information in Irish at Irish speaking schools
- The use of Irish in the Department's letterhead
- The use of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and other regional interpreting and translation services
- The commissioning of work to enable the Department to contribute to the Northern Ireland Civil Service report to the European Committee of Experts in preparation for their assessment visit to Northern Ireland
- The issue of guidance on the use of Irish to all staff.

Efficiency Savings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to breakdown the money saved in each area of efficiency savings identified for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3526/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Based on the latest figures available, as at 30th September Northern Trust had achieved £4.9m of efficiency savings in the following areas:

	Reform of Public Administration	Workforce controls	Regional initiatives	Total
£m	3.8	0.5	0.6	4.9

Gartmore Nursing Home in Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when was the last offer made by the Western Health and Social Care Trust for a patient placement in Gartmore Nursing home in Omagh. (AQW 3559/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Western Health and Social Care Trust have advised that the last permanent admission to Gortmore House was on the 14th August 2008, with no further request for permanent admission since. At present, there are currently three residents temporarily placed in Gortmore with further bookings taken as far in advance as 9th February.

Bangor Health and Care Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the timescale for the completion of the new Bangor Health Centre, recently announced by his Department. (AQW 3567/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

As you will no doubt be aware, the funding available to me over the next 10 years is insufficient to meet all the capital demands across the HSC estate. To ensure that I make optimum use of the capital resources available to me I commissioned a review of capital priorities earlier in the summer.

Under current plans it is anticipated that the proposed Bangor Health and Care Centre project will commence in 2016/17 with a completion date of 20/21, subject to business case approval.

The capital cost of this scheme is estimated to be £39 million subject to Business Case development and approval.

I am not yet in a position to confirm the location for the provision of the new Health and Care Centre in Bangor as the Business Case is still being developed by the South Eastern Trust.

Bangor Health and Care Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he intends to consult with pharmacists in Bangor about services that they will provide at the proposed Bangor Health Care Centre. (AQW 3568/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are no plans at present to include pharmaceutical facilities in Bangor Health and Care Centre.

Bangor Health and Care Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consultation will the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust have with pharmacists in Bangor about services that they will provide at the proposed Bangor Health Care Centre. (AQW 3569/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are no plans at present to include pharmaceutical facilities in Bangor Health and Care Centre.

Bangor Health and Care Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what pharmaceutical facilities are planned for the proposed Bangor Health Care Centre. (AQW 3570/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are no plans at present to include pharmaceutical facilities in Bangor Health and Care Centre.

Bangor Health and Care Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances can he give that the proposed new Bangor Health Care Centre will not damage services provided by pharmacies in Bangor.

(AQW 3571/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are no plans at present to include pharmaceutical facilities in Bangor Health and Care Centre.

Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have speech, language and communication difficulties.

(AQW 3578/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Junior Doctors

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) the number of; and (ii) current vacancies for, junior doctors, broken down by (a) grade and (b) Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 3618/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is set out in the tables below.

(I) JUNIOR DOCTOR STAFF IN POST BY GRADE AND TRUST AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2008.

HSC Trust	Foundation Officer Year 1		Foundation Officer Year 2		Specialty Registrar	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	99	99.0	116	114.9	658	650.2
Northern	36	36.0	59	58.8	155	154.1
South Eastern	39	39.0	39	38.1	174	173.5
Southern	28	28.0	44	43.1	149	147.9
Western	33	33.0	39	39.0	169	168.0

Source: Human Resource Management System. Figures exclude staff with a whole-time equivalent less than or equal to 0.03.

(II) THE HEADCOUNT NUMBER OF CURRENT VACANCIES BY GRADE AND TRUST AS AT 17TH DECEMBER 2008.

HSC Trust	Foundation Officer Year 1	Foundation Officer Year 2	Specialty Registrar
Belfast	2	0	44
Northern	2	2	18
South Eastern	0	0	9
Southern	0	0	15
Western	0	2	21

Source: Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA).

Young Disabled People

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what investment is being made in support of transition services for young disabled people; (ii) what transition services have been developed across the Health and Social Care Trust areas; (iii) what is the outcome of liaison with the Department of

Education and the Department for Employment and Learning about developing transition services; and (iv) what transition services are available for young learning disabled people, in the Derry/Londonderry area.

(AQW 3641/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) My Department invested £0.9m through the Children and Young People Funding Package from 2006 to 2008 in support of transitions services for young people. This investment has now been mainstreamed through the Department's normal budgetary mechanisms, with effect from April 2008 and is in addition to each Health and Social Care Trust's investment plans.
- (ii) The provision of services is a matter for Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. A range of transition services have been developed across all 5 Trust areas.
- (iii) Liaison with the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning on developing transition services for young people is ongoing and my Department continues to work closely with those Departments.
- (iv) Within the Londonderry area, the Western Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) has in place a transitions service to meet the needs of children with a physical and sensory disability and children with a learning disability. This service is currently being remodelled as part of the ongoing reform and modernisation agenda. In support of the transitions service the Trust provides an operational multi-agency group, a Designated Appropriate Officer, as required, under the Disabled Person's Act, a Strategic Senior Management Transitions Group and revised transitions leaflets and information. The Trust has two Transitions Officers in place to co-ordinate transitions planning with schools, health and social care staff and families. Contracted Services with Praxis and Mencap are also available to assist transitions officers dealing with young people who have a learning disability.

Young Disabled People

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in respect of the Derry/Londonderry City Council area, (i) how many severely learning disabled adults reside there; (ii) how many severely learning disabled young people reside there, at each age from 14 to 18 years old; (iii) what services are in place for severely learning disabled adults; and (iv) how many places are available in each training centre for severely learning disabled adults.

(AQW 3643/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The provision of services is a matter for Health & Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. The Western Health & Social Care Trust have advised me that they provide an array of services to adults with a severe learning disability which include assessment and treatment services at Lakeview Hospital, Consultant out-patient clinics, day services, respite care services in various forms and accommodation services which are provided in statutory facilities and through contract with private and voluntary residential and nursing homes.

Trainee Nurses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many trainee nurses have found employment in the Health Service in this financial year.

(AQW 3648/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: From information provided by Queen's University, Belfast, out of 394 students who graduated in 2008, 332 returned destination survey questionnaires. Out of these 246 or 74% had found employment in HSC Trusts, with a further 51 or 15% on HSC Trust employment waiting lists.

At the University of Ulster, destination statistics for those students who completed their course in September 2008 are not yet available. However for the 137 students who completed in September 2007, 117 returned destination surveys. Of those 108 or 92% are employed as nurses in N. Ireland.

Ards Hospital

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available at Ards Hospital. (AQW 3649/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Ards Hospital provides the population of Newtownards and the surrounding areas with specialist primary, secondary, and community care services, including a GP out of hours service. The hospital has 24 acute inpatient beds for adults with functional mental illness, a minor injuries unit, GP ward, outpatient services, radiology, and a community mental health service. There are specialist clinics in diabetic, respiratory and cardiac services, as well as general medicine, tissue viability, dietetics and dermatology. There are 2 day surgery theatres with endoscopy facilities, gynaecological day surgery, and a children's ENT outpatient service.

Bangor Hospital

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available at Bangor Hospital. (AQW 3650/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Bangor Hospital provides the population of North Down with specialist primary and community care services, and operates in co-ordination with the Ulster Hospital to provide appropriate secondary and intermediate care services.

Bangor Hospital provides a range of services in various specialities including a 20-bed GP ward, a minor injuries unit, outpatient services, radiology and diagnostic imaging, and a community mental health service.

People Requesting Treatment for the Flu

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people per constituency requested treatment for the flu in (i) November 2008; and (ii) December 2008. (AQW 3691/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of people per constituency who requested treatment for the flu in (i) November 2008; and (ii) December 2008 is not available.

Viruses in Hospitals

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in respect of the last year (i) what is the scale of viruses present in the Ulster Hospital; (ii) to detail the viruses found in all hospitals; (iii) what steps were taken to eradicate the viruses; and (iv) if they have returned in the same period. (AQW 3692/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The various forms of information requested in this question either do not exist or could not be captured without incurring disproportionate costs.

Viruses cannot be eradicated: they are found wherever there is life and are thought to have existed since living cells first evolved. In a hospital environment effective infection control measures such as good hand hygiene practice, the use of personal protective equipment, environmental cleaning, and the use of isolation rooms all help to control the spread of infection, including infections caused by viruses.

Patient Satisfaction Survey

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the total cost of the patient satisfaction survey being conducted by MORI. (AQW 3731/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Patient Experience Survey, which has been introduced in Northern Ireland this year as part of the UK Wide General Medical Services (GMS) Contract will, for the first time, provide data on patient satisfaction with the services they receive from their GP practices and specifically under the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract.

It will provide the Department, Boards and the new Regional HSC Board with better information than ever before on patients' experiences of the delivery of services in primary care. Practices will also be able to use the results of the survey as a tool for implementing changes to improve services for their patients

The total cost of the GP Patient Survey is £479,200, which represents approximately 0.2% of the total cost of the GMS budget.

Eating Disorders

Mr Doherty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to people who have an eating disorder, to provide by Health and Social Care Trust area (i) the number of people diagnosed, in each of the last five years; (ii) the gender and age of people diagnosed, in each of the last five years; (iii) the services available; and (iv) plans he has to build on the existing services. (AQW 3758/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is attached (tab 1)

I am committed to the development of specialist eating disorder services. I have secured an additional £1 million over the next three years to enhance access to these services and my expert advice indicates that investment should continue to be used to develop the range of specific specialist services. I have however also agreed to the development of impatient capacity for those with complex needs.

This will be supported by specialist community bases staff on an in-reach basis.

TAB 1

NUMBERS DIAGNOSED WITH EATING DISORDERS

Western Trust*	Age 0-13		Age 14-18		Adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003/04	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004/05	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005/06	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006/07	0	0	0	7	3	40
2007/08	0	0	0	8	2	72

*Service commenced in September 2006

South Eastern Trust:	Age 0-13		Age 14-18		Adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003/04	2	1	2	3	0	2
2004/05	1	3	0	5	2	0
2005/06	1	4	0	7	0	4
2006/07	1	4	1	2	0	3
2007/08	0	0	0	2	0	2

Belfast Trust	Children	Adults	
		Male	Female
2003/04	0	N/A	N/A
2004/05	0	N/A	N/A
2005/06*	31	5	51
2006/07	36	7	73
2007/05	48	8	82

*Service commenced in April 2006.

For children Belfast Trust does not have a break down of gender or age as this would involve a manual trawl of records which would incur disproportionate cost

Northern Trust*	Age 0-13		Age 14-18		Adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003/04	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004/05	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005/06	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006/07	0	0	0	0	4	47
2007/08	13	7	2	27	5	85

*Service commenced in April 2006

Southern Trust*	Age 0-13		Age 14-18		Adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003/04	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004/05	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005/06	0	0	0	0	1	36
2006/07	0	1	1	8	3	44
2007/08	0	6	4	8	0	47

*The Southern Trust Adult Eating Disorder Service was not operational until August 2005

Services Provided by Each Trust:

Northern HSC Trust

Adult Services

In the last 2 years, a Specialist Eating Disorder Team has been established which provides out-patient appointments throughout the Northern Trust Area.

The Northern Trust Eating Disorder Service has input from the Regional Specialist Consultant Psychiatrist one day a month and from the Regional Specialist Dietician one day every fortnight. Both these specialists can be accessed at any time with urgent queries.

Where a person is assessed as needing specialist in-patient treatment, an ECR (Extra-Contractual Referral) can be made to Specialist Units in the UK and Dublin, with follow-up provided upon discharge.

Child and Adolescent Services

The Trust has recently appointed a dedicated staff team to respond to the treatment needs of young people under the age of 18 with eating disorders. Team members are Nurse Practitioners, who have particular expertise in the area of eating disorders.

In addition to this, there is a consultation service once per month offering services to other professionals. There is also a telephone helpline, which operates daily from 12noon to 1pm, again providing a service to other professionals.

Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trusts

Adult Services

The Eastern Board Adult Eating Disorders Service has been operating since April 2006. It offers Specialist Tier 3 outpatient treatment to people with Eating Disorders in the Belfast Trust and South Eastern Trust. It also acts as the regional triage to Specialist inpatient provision currently provided in England and the Republic of Ireland.

Child and Adolescent Services

The Trust is in the process of developing a specialist Eating Disorder Service specifically for children and young people (0-18) which should be fully operational by early 2010.

The Trust is currently not commissioned to provide a specialist inpatient Eating Disorder Service and arrangements are made for children/ young people requiring such services to access inpatient care in Great Britain. Inpatient care can however be provided locally for less complex cases.

Southern HSC Trust

Adult Services

The Southern Trust Adult Eating Disorder Team is a community/outpatient service. Treatment offered includes structured psychological therapies, dietetic input and the involvement of families and carers.

In addition to the statutory service provision for eating disorders, valuable support is also provided by voluntary agencies.

Children and Young People With An Eating Disorder

The Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service is a newly established multi-disciplinary team, who provide prompt, comprehensive assessment and treatment of young people and their families, who present on referral with eating difficulties in the form of Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and EDNOS (Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified) up to the age of 18.

The CAMHS Eating Disorder Service has currently no dedicated in-patient provision. Should a young person require a hospital admission this is arranged in joint collaboration with the Lead Consultant and the Eating Disorder Service.

Western HSC Trust

Adult Services

In the Western Trust area there is a Trust wide dedicated Eating Disorders Team, within the Psychological Therapies Team, who are specialist trained. There is also sessional input into the Eating Disorder Team from a Consultant in this field.

Where a person is assessed as needing specialist in-patient treatment, an ECR (Extra-Contractual Referral) can be made to Specialist Unit, with follow-up provided upon discharge.

Child Services

Any child under the age of 16 years who has an eating disorder will be supported by the CAMHS service. The CAMHS service is currently recruiting to fill two specialist Eating Disorder practitioners and two specialist dietician posts.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

M2 Widening Scheme

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to confirm if the M2 widening scheme will be completed in March 2009; and to state the completion date scheduled in the original proposals. (AQW 3697/09)

The Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that the M2 improvement scheme is currently programmed by the contractor for completion in March 2009, some five months ahead of the contractor's original programmed completion date of 28 August 2009.

Salt Boxes

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 3480/09, to detail (i) the total number of salt boxes; and (ii) the plans for additional boxes along with their locations, in Rathenraw. (AQW 3704/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are three salt boxes in Rathenraw. These are located at Devon Court, Dorset Close and Somerset Park. However, the salt box at Somerset Park has been removed, due to vandalism, but will be replaced.

There are plans for two additional boxes at Norfolk Square and Sussex Square. It is intended that these will be provided before 9 January 2009.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Maintenance Budget for Craigavon

Mr O'Dowd asked the Minister for Social Development in respect of the Craigavon Housing Executive district (i) how much money was allocated for routine maintenance in the financial years, 2006-07 and 2007-08; (ii) why no budget has been provided for routine maintenance since September 2008; (iii) what is the estimated cost of all outstanding repairs; and (iv) what actions her Department is taking to assist the district considering the shortfall in the budget. (AQW 3281/09)

The Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie):

- (i) The routine maintenance budget for Craigavon for 2006/07 and 2007/08 was £1,556,000 and £1,296,000 respectively.
- (ii) The routine maintenance budget spend between 1 September 2008 and 30 November 2008 was £434,000.
- (iii) There is approximately £10,000 of reactive maintenance repairs being arranged for the Craigavon area.
- (iv) It is anticipated that there will be no funding shortfall in the response maintenance budget for Craigavon.

Satisfactory Property Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development how many properties were purchased by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive under the acquisition of satisfactory houses scheme in each of the last five years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 3303/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The question cannot be answered in the format requested. The table below details the number of properties purchased under the Acquisition of Satisfactory Houses scheme by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Council Area	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
West Belfast	1	2	0	0	0
East Belfast	1	0	0	0	0
North Belfast	7	3	0	0	0
Castlereagh	0	0	3	0	0
Antrim	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	10	5	3	0	0

Satisfactory Property Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development to provide the total expenditure used to purchase property through the acquisition of satisfactory property scheme, during each of the last five years.

(AQW 3305/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The table below details the expenditure used to purchase properties under the Acquisition of Satisfactory Houses scheme, by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Area	2003/2004 Spend - £k	2004/2005 Spend - £k	2005/2006 Spend -£k	2006/2007 Spend -£k	2007/2008 Spend - £k
West Belfast	97	183	0	0	0
East Belfast	175	0	0	0	0
North Belfast	462.9	237	0	0	0
Castlereagh	0	0	569.5	0	0
Antrim	57	0	0	0	0
Totals	791.9	420	569.5	0	0

Housing Repairs

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses reported to the Housing Executive with (i) damp; and (ii) serious condensation, in each year since 2006, broken down by regional area. (AQW 3395/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The attached table details the number of repair requests made to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with damp and serious condensation since 2006.

Housing Executive Area	Damp			Condensation		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Belfast	58	96	36	10	10	32
South East	31	52	78	11	5	48
South	23	26	52	4	2	3
North East	17	24	55	0	20	27
West	22	29	64	8	5	13

Public Sector Housing

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development what action her Department is taking to identify potential sites for public sector housing, in the East Belfast constituency. (AQW 3468/09)

The Minister for Social Development: A total of 987 new homes have already been identified across 64 separate sites in East Belfast over the next 5 years. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive continues to work closely with the Housing Association movement to find additional sites where the need is clearly identified and resources are available.

Housing Build

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development if she still intends to deliver the (i) 5,250 houses by 2011; and (ii) 10,000 houses by 2013, as stated in the Assembly on 26 February 2008. (AQW 3470/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I am committed to delivering a New Housing Agenda that can start to address the growing housing need across Northern Ireland. Central to this must be an increased provision in the supply of social and affordable housing and if I am given the resources I will deliver these much needed houses.

European Charter on Minority Languages

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to demonstrate how his Department and its arms length bodies, have applied, in practice, the European Charter on Minority Languages in relation to the Irish language. (AQW 3518/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department is represented on the Inter Departmental Charter Implementation Group, which is currently developing a strategy for indigenous languages. The Department is meeting its commitments under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Irish and Ulster-Scots and has issued guidance to all staff on this subject. A Code of Courtesy has been developed to enable staff to deal with customers wishing to conduct their business in Irish as well as Ulster-Scots. Both the guidance and Code of Courtesy are available on the Department's internet site in English, Irish and Ulster-Scots. Information on the Code of Courtesy is also included as part of the induction package for all staff joining the Department. In addition, as required under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, documents can be made available in Irish upon request where there is an identified need.

Adaption Grants

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development what is the adaption budget for the Housing Executive in the Strangford constituency. (AQW 3538/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive record adaptation grants are based on the local District Council boundaries. The Strangford constituency takes in parts of the District Council areas of Ards, Castlereagh and Down.

The adaptation budget for 2008/2009 for the Ards, Castlereagh and Down Councils is £2,084,000.

Social Housing

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people have been evicted from social housing; (ii) the reasons for these evictions; and (ii) the areas where they took place, in each of the past five years. (AQW 3549/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Details and the reasons for evictions secured by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Associations from 2004/2005 onwards are set out in the following 4 tables.

TABLE 1 – HOUSING EXECUTIVE EVICTIONS - NON PAYMENT OF RENT

Housing Executive District	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Antrim	1	0	0	1	3
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0
Ballycastle	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	0	0	0	0	2
Bangor	3	4	0	5	3
Belfast (East)	2	0	4	3	1
Belfast (West)	0	1	0	0	1
Belfast (North)	0	4	6	1	4
Belfast (South)	0	0	1	0	3
Belfast (Shankill)	0	6	3	4	3
Carrickfergus	0	1	6	2	5
Castlereagh	0	4	1	1	0
Coleraine	0	0	0	0	3
Collon	0	0	0	0	0
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0

Housing Executive District	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Down	5	3	4	0	2
Dungannon	2	0	0	2	0
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0
Larne	0	0	2	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn (Poleglass)	5	5	6	3	4
Lisburn (Antrim Street)	1	0	0	0	0
Lurgan/Brown	2	5	0	1	0
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey 1	4	0	0	3	2
Newtownabbey 2	1	0	0	5	2
Newtownards	2	1	0	0	2
Newry	0	0	0	0	2
Omagh	0	0	0	0	1
Portadown	2	4	1	0	0
Strabane	0	0	0	0	0
Waterloo	0	0	0	0	0
Waterside	0	1	0	0	2
Total	30	39	34	31	45

TABLE 2 – HOUSING EXECUTIVE EVICTIONS - ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Housing Executive District	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Armagh	1	0	0	0	0
Bangor	0	0	1	0	0
Belfast (South)	0	0	1	0	0
Down	1	0	0	0	0
Dungannon	0	1	1	1	0
Fermanagh	0	1	0	0	0
Larne	1	0	0	0	0
Lisburn(Antrim Street)	0	1	0	0	2
Lurgan/Brown	0	1	0	0	1
Newtownards	0	1	0	0	0
Omagh	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	5	3	1	4

TABLE 3 – HOUSING ASSOCIATION EVICTIONS - NON PAYMENT OF RENT

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Armagh	0	1	0	0	0
Bangor	0	0	0	0	2
Belfast	1	1	1	0	2

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	1	0
Dromore	1	0	0	0	0
Glenarm	0	1	0	0	0
Strabane	0	1	0	0	0
Total	2	4	1	1	4

TABLE 4 – HOUSING ASSOCIATION EVICTIONS - ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008 (to date)
Ballycastle	0	0	0	1	0
Belfast	0	2	2	1	0
Derry	0	0	0	1	0
Richhill	0	0	1	0	0
Total	0	2	3	3	0

In addition, one Housing Association tenant was evicted from Belfast (City Centre area) in 2007/2008 for not using their home as their principle residence.

Monitoring Rounds

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development has any of the budget allocation over the last two monitoring rounds been redirected to other programmes and if so, (i) what is the amount; (ii) to where was it redirected; and (iii) what the impact on the programmes will be that lost this resource. (AQW 3560/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information requested, as it relates to the June & September monitoring round re-allocations, is in the table below. The implications of the December monitoring round are still being considered by the Department.

JUNE & SEPTEMBER 2008 MONITORING ROUNDS

Amount £m	Expenditure Type	Movement		Impact on donor area programmes
June 2008				
50.00	Capital	From Social Security Agency	To Housing	No in-year consequences, as the Jobs & Benefits Office rollout has been re-phased to later years.
September 2008				
0.080	Capital	From Social Security Agency	To Child Maintenance & Enforcement Division	No impact, as year end easement still anticipated in Social Security Agency capital programme.

Amount £m	Expenditure Type	Movement		Impact on donor area programmes
15.499	Capital / Capital Grant	From Urban Regeneration & Community Development Group	To Housing	The funding transferred came from a combination of additional receipts, easements in other areas and re-phasing of certain projects and programmes. As some of the Urban Regeneration work has been re-phased, none of the Programmes will be adversely affected by the transfers to Housing.

Employment and Support Allowances

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) why people who make a claim for Employment and Support Allowances without a BT phone line have to pay; and (ii) what percentage of claimants have made contact by a BT phone line. (AQW 3563/09)

The Minister for Social Development: New claims for Employment and Support Allowance can be made on a BT 0800 provided number. BT do not charge for the call, instead these costs are met by my Department. Customers ringing from a non BT landline or mobile may be charged by their network provider for the connection onto the BT number. However, to minimise the impact of this, customers are alerted to the position at the outset of their call and, on request, my Department will call the customer back in order to take their claim.

The information to determine the percentage of customers making contact by BT landline is not captured by our service provider. To gather this information from other sources would be at disproportionate cost.

Glenavy Village

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to detail when the social housing scheme proposed by the Housing Executive for Glenavy Village, will commence. (AQW 3606/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has received a bid from a Housing Association to deliver a new build scheme for 21 units at Pigeontown Road, Glenavy during 2010/11 and this is currently being considered as part of the new draft Social Housing Development Programme 2009/10 – 2013/14.

The new five year Social Housing Development Programme is currently being formulated and subject to approval will be published in February 2009.

Public Sector Housing

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what action her Department is taking to identify potential sites for public sector housing, in the North Down constituency. (AQW 3611/09)

The Minister for Social Development: During the next three years, 16 sites with the potential to deliver 328 new homes have already been identified across North Down. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive continues to work closely with the Housing Association movement to find additional sites where the need is clearly identified and resources available.

Department Restructuring

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many jobs will be lost in her Department and how many Social Security offices will close as a result of restructuring; and for her assessment of the impact of these changes on her Department. (AQW 3615/09)

The Minister for Social Development: There will be no Social Security Offices closed as a result of restructuring proposals. With regards to jobs, as the recently published consultation documents make clear, no staff will lose their employment.

Social Housing

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what social clauses have been included in the social housing procurement strategy to guarantee that local developers and construction workers will benefit; and (ii) what provision has been made for apprentice places in the strategy. (AQW 3616/09)

The Minister for Social Development: One of the reasons for the introduction of the Social Housing Development Programme Procurement Strategy is to achieve full compliance with all aspects of public procurement policy such as those set out in the publication 'Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Procurement' relating to long-term unemployed and apprentices. There is a range of possibilities which make it possible to use public procurement to assist in attaining desired social objectives. Whilst it is not possible or legal to guarantee work to local developers and contractors, social clauses (including provision of apprentices) will be introduced into construction contracts for social housing during the implementation of this Strategy.

Carrickfergus Housing

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses and flats the Housing Executive has allocated in the Carrickfergus area, since January 2007. (AQW 3619/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Since January 2007 there have been a total of 286 properties allocated in the Carrickfergus area. This is broken down as follows; 116 flats, 95 houses, 73 bungalows, and 2 maisonettes.

Hospital Lane in Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration she has given to using any underspend in her budget to fund the multi element improvement scheme at Hospital Lane in Limavady. (AQW 3642/09)

The Minister for Social Development: There is no underspend in my budget and following the outcome of the December Monitoring round an urgent review of all Improvement Schemes such as this is underway. Whilst the scheme design for the first phase of the strategy has been approved, a revised programme is now being prepared based on the resources available to me and it will be published as soon as possible.

Pensioner Bungalows Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if funding is now available for the commencement of the pensioner bungalows scheme at Ballyree Drive, Bangor, scheduled for May 2009. (AQW 3646/09)

The Minister for Social Development: An improvement scheme for the Ballyree bungalows is currently planned involving improvement works to 44 dwellings at an estimated cost of £2.4m. However, all Northern Ireland Housing Executive programmes are currently under review. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive will work to formulate a revised programme as a matter of urgency over the coming weeks.

Economic Downturn

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what plans her Department has to help the most vulnerable in society due to the economic downturn. (AQW 3657/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has put in place a range of measures to help people in Northern Ireland to cope with the economic downturn.

From 5th January 2009 a package of measures to support vulnerable home owners will be introduced to alleviate the financial strain on those who may face having their homes repossessed. The measures include shortening the waiting period in Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance for assistance with mortgage interest payments. There will also be an increase in the capital limit on loans from £100,000 to £200,000 for which assistance is available for new working age and certain Pension Credit claims.

These measures should go some way in helping to prevent the rise in repossessions.

On 25 November 2008 I announced a one-off increase in this year's Christmas Bonus payment from £10 to £70. The £60 increase is equivalent to bringing forward the up-rating of the basic State Pension from April to January. The traditional £10 Bonus was paid as usual in December and the remaining £60 will be paid in the New Year.

For 2008/2009 there will be a one-off increased payment of the Winter Fuel Payment from £200 to £250 for those aged 60 or over and from £300 to £400 for those aged 80 and over.

There will be a one-off increased payment of the Cold Weather Payment from £8.50 to £25 for each period of cold weather for the winter of 2008/09.

In May 2008 I launched the 2008/09 Benefit Uptake Programme to increase awareness of social security benefits. This year's Programme will see over 115,000 people contacted about possible benefit entitlement. In addition the Social Security Agency has a comprehensive system of reviews to ensure people are receiving their full entitlement. Since April 2008, over 5,000 cases have been adjusted upwards resulting in extra benefit payments of approximately £12.8m.

Wood Pellet Boilers

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development how many wood pellet boilers have been installed by the Housing Executive; and how this compares in cost and efficiency with other forms of heating. (AQW 3663/09)

The Minister for Social Development: To date the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has installed 26 wood pellet boilers in pilot schemes. The average cost to install a wood pellet boiler is £720 more expensive than installing a full oil heating system with condensing boiler and oil tank and £1920 more expensive than a full gas heating system with condensing boiler.

With regard to the efficiency of the units, wood pellet boilers are 84.4% efficient, compared to gas condensing boilers which are 90-91.3% efficient and oil condensing boilers which are 92.2% efficient.

Social Security Social Fund Loans

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development if she will widen the scope of Social Security Social Fund loans so that people can access loans to pay for utilities bills such as gas, electricity and oil. (AQW 3676/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The aim of the Budgeting Loan scheme is to enable people, who are most likely to need help with budgeting for one-off expenses, to have access to interest-free credit. The Budgeting Loan scheme has a fixed amount of money and must be prioritised accordingly. There are no plans to widen the scope of the scheme.

Crisis loans are interest-free loans which are intended to help meet an immediate short-term need in an emergency if there is serious damage or risk to health and safety. Crisis loans are decided on individual circumstances and subject to budgetary constraints.

Energy Performance Certificates

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if the Housing Executive will sub-contract out the Energy Performance certificate for the Housing Executive Tenancy Re-lets. (AQW 3693/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive provides Energy Performance Certificates using in-house resources and has no plans to sub-contract this work.

Strategic Business Review

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development if she (i) will ensure that employees in the Income Support section of the Omagh Jobs and Benefits Office will not be relocated to Derry/Londonderry under the ongoing Strategic Business Review; and (ii) will consider the equality impact of proposals to relocate jobs from the Omagh Jobs and Benefits Office to Derry/Londonderry. (AQW 3756/09)

The Minister for Social Development: All of the proposals under the Strategic Business Review are currently the subject of a public consultation exercise which started on the 27 November 2008 and is due to end in late April 2009. The consultation process will include the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment. I will not be making any final decisions until the consultation process, including consideration of the equality impact of proposals, has been completed.

In line with this, no decisions have been made for any office as to which individual employees would be relocated or to where. However all of the proposals are based on the principle that any relocation of staff would be within reasonable daily travel provisions contained within their terms and conditions of employment.

ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Commission Staff Transport

Mr McKay asked the Assembly Commission what percentage of its staff (i) take part in car-sharing schemes; (ii) use public transport; and (iii) take single-person car journeys to work every day. (AQW 3449/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Rev Dr R Coulter): Northern Ireland Assembly has been working in partnership with a consortium of other Stormont Estate users (OFMDFM, DFP, DARD, DHSSPS, DETI and NIO) in developing a Workplace Travel Plan (WTP).

The main objective of the WTP is to encourage staff to travel by sustainable modes to and from work as well as for business trips. As part of the WTP a staff travel study was undertaken of Assembly staff to establish workplace travel behaviours. A total of 92% of Assembly staff responded to the survey.

Figures obtained show that 9% of staff take part in a car sharing scheme; 15% use public transport whilst 63% of staff surveyed make single person car journeys. As a consequence of this survey a number of travel plan targets have been set for the whole of the Stormont Estate for a two year period as follows;

- Increase cycle modal share to 2% (2009) and 4% (2010)
- Increase walking from 1.4% to 2.5% (2009) and 3.5% (2010)
- Increase car sharing from 18.5% to 24% (2009) and 30% by (2010)
- Increase bus users to 12% (2009) and 15% (2010).

CORRIGENDUM

Written Answer Booklet of 2 January 2009

(Volume 36, No WA2)

In page WA126, replace the answer to question (AQW 3097/09) with;

Tá an t-eolas seo a leanas curtha ar fáil ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus léiríonn sé an coigilteas ar chostais a rinneadh trí híslíú ar líon na bpatról trasnaithe scoile ón bhliain 2003/04:

The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information which shows the cost savings through the reduction in the number of school crossing patrols since 2003/04:

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Belfast East	£25,709	-	£4,636	£24,340	£21,100
Belfast North	£23,772	-	-	£14,604	£18,872
Belfast South	£23,772	-	-	£9,736	£4,718
Belfast West	£11,886	-	£4,636	£19,472	£28,308
East Antrim	£13,140	-	£4,520	-	-
North Antrim	-	-	£4,520	-	£10,361

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
South Antrim	-	-	-	£4,801	-
North Down	-	-	£6,208	-	£11,664
South Down	-	-	£6,208	£6,411	-
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	£8,938	£4,541	£23,160	£9,445	£4,978
Foyle	-	-	£88,007	£9,445	-
Lagan Valley	£5,899	£30,415	£12,416	-	£17,496
East Derry	£4,380	-	£13,896	£4,722	-
Mid Ulster	-	£9,083	£27,792	-	-
Newry and Armagh	£13,406	£9,083	£46,319	£4,722	-
Strangford	-	£6,083	£6,208	-	£23,328
West Tyrone	£31,281	£4,541	£64,847	£9,445	£4,978
Upper Bann	£17,875	£18,165	£115,799	£23,612	£4,978
Total	£180,058	£81,911	£429,172	£140,755	£150,781

School crossing patrols are not arbitrarily removed but are only removed by Boards where an easement indicates that the level of hazards has diminished sufficiently to warrant such action.

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