
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 20 March 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Trade Unions

Mr D McKay asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the outcome of its meeting with UNITE union and if it intends to act on any matters arising from that meeting. (AQW 5769/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): On 14th October 2008, as part of a series of meetings about the economic downturn, we met with a group of trade unionists comprising the following: -

- Northern Ireland Committee Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- NIPSA
- Ulster Teachers Union
- UNISON
- UNITE
- Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers
- UCATT - Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

The topics discussed included the state of the local economy including the effects of the recession, the cost of living and the construction industry. The views of trade unions, along with other groups consulted by us, were taken into account as part of the Executive's consideration of measures to help deal with the economic downturn.

On 4 November 2008 and 5 February 2009 we met representatives of Northern Ireland Committee Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The topics discussed include future relationships with the Executive, the use of Public Private Partnerships and the economy.

To date individual unions have not requested separate meetings with us.

Meetings with Banks

Mr M Storey asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the meetings that have been held with banks in 2009. (AQW 6134/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are continuing our dialogue with the banks. We met with the Ulster Bank on 3 February 2009. This was followed by a meeting with the Northern Bank on 26 February. We then met the Bank of Ireland on 3 March 2009.

We are due to meet with the First Trust/AIB in early April 2009.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Orange Halls

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she has taken since entering office to help strengthen the capacity of Orange Halls in rural communities. (AQW 5811/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): Orange Halls Management Committees have access to support programmes managed and funded by my Department in rural areas. A range of capacity building activities has been available to all rural dwellers through the Rural Community Network (RCN); 12 local Rural Support Networks (RSNs); and NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN), funded by my Department through the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (PBSP). I am considering continued funding for this type of development support now that the PBSP is closing.

The New Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 will also provide opportunities under the Quality of Life Measures in Axis 3. This aspect of the Rural Development Programme is being managed on behalf of the Department by Local Action Groups and Local Authority Joint Committees

Forest Service

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to her answer to AQW 1834/09, if Forest Service will create an inventory of all woodland areas to address both the limitations of the current approach and to deliver on the commitment in the 2002 Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. (AQW 5818/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Forest Service has acknowledged some limitations in the current woodland inventory in relation to the estimates around new private woodland created outside forestry grant schemes and in my earlier reply (AQW 1912/09), Forest Service indicated that it will consider using other available woodland information to provide more comprehensive inventory data, allowing changes in woodland cover over the long term to be more fully captured. This process has been initiated in partnership with the NI Environment Agency (NIEA). Progress in terms of implementation of this aspect of the Biodiversity Strategy will be reported at regular intervals through the Native Woodland Group.

The Forest Service holds a significant amount of biodiversity data about the Department's woodland and, in respect of both state and private woodland, is able to make use of biodiversity information from a wide range of sources which either was not available in 2002 or not to the extent that it is available today. This includes the Ancient Woodland Inventory, data from NIEA, including surveys of Wood Pasture and Parkland, Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest (SLNCI), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), the NIEA Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, data in relation to woodland in Countryside Management Schemes, and data on the Forest Service Private Woodland Geographical Information System (GIS). These data sets provide biodiversity data to assist in managing woodland sites and deliver on the commitment under the Biodiversity Strategy.

Wind Turbines

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail funding awards for the erection of wind turbines under the Rural Development Programme, since May 2007. (AQW 5824/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Since May 2007 no wind turbines have been funded under the Rural Development Programme.

Agricultural and Rural Development Committee

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to (i) list the dates of; and (ii) detail the topics discussed at each meeting with the Chairman of the Agricultural and Rural Development Committee, over the last six months.[R] (AQW 5860/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My meetings with the Chairman of the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development Committee are outlined below:-

Date	Topic(s)
7 October 2008	Meeting with the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development Committee – Animal Health issues; Flooding; Wind Energy for Rural Business Project; Farm Nutrient Management Scheme; and Ministerial Priorities.
23 February 2009	Farm Modernisation Scheme
24 February 2009	Meeting with the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development Committee – Farm Modernisation Scheme

Educational Schemes

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants are available to farmers to provide educational schemes to schools about the business activities of farms, and where the grants can be accessed. (AQW 5892/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are no specific grants for farmers to provide educational schemes to schools about the business activities of farms. However funding opportunities exist for support under measure Axis 3 of the new Rural Development Programme to assist micro enterprises or persons wishing to set up a new off-farm non-agricultural business.

In the North Down area the Rural Development measures are being delivered on DARD's behalf by the Down Rural Area Partnership. The Group will support projects which are congruent with the priorities in the local rural development strategy and which have been successful in a competitive assessment. The group are currently seeking expressions of interest and can be contacted either through their chair, Mr David Kerr, telephone 07834254228 or through the Leanne McCready, Principal Project Development Officer, Ards Borough Council, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, Co. Down BT23 4AP, Telephone: 028 9182 4065 or by email: leanne.mccready@ards-council.gov.uk

Reducing Stress in the Workplace

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development given that stress is the primary reason for absence from work, what action she intends to take to improve motivation and morale and reduce stress in the workplace. (AQW 5952/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: A number of support measures are already in place within the Department to help those staff who experience stress including welfare support and an employee assistance programme that is available 24/7 for staff and their immediate family. In addition we recently hosted a stress roadshow in conjunction with Occupational Health and NI Civil Service Sports Association. An NICS wide survey on stress is also being considered which will influence the existing NICS policy and DARD will be participating in this. We are currently researching the availability of additional interventions that should improve motivation and morale and thereby contribute to a reduction of absence levels including those attributable to stress in the workplace.

European Union

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has received from the European Union since 10 July 2008, in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 657/2008. (AQW 5973/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: From 10 July 2008 to 9 March 2009 my Department received £175,503.29 from the European Union for milk supplied in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 657/2008.

EU School Milk Scheme

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the milk supplier(s) used in the EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme; and the quantity of milk, per week, that is supplied to schools.

(AQW 5975/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are six suppliers of milk under the EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme. These are Ballyrashane Co-operative Agricultural & Dairy Society (1990) Ltd, Dale Farm Ltd, Fane Valley Co-operative Society Ltd, Grove Dairy, Joseph Gibson and Stevenson Dairies.

Based on claims submitted for the summer 2008 term, which is the most recent data available, the average quantity of milk claimed per school day was 10,799 litres, which equates to 53,995 litres per week.

EU School Milk Scheme

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many schools take part in the European Union School Milk Scheme, broken down by Education and Library Board; and how many children in each of these schools receive such milk every day.

(AQW 5977/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Based on claims submitted for the summer 2008 term, which is the most recent data available, the number of schools and children in each Education and Library Board (“ELB”) participating in the EU School Milk Scheme is as follows -

ELB	Schools	Children
Belfast	102	7,472
North Eastern	203	14,859
South Eastern	103	6,368
Southern	170	11,266
Western	186	13,958
Total	764	53,923

EU School Milk Scheme

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what marketing and promotional material is provided to primary school principals in relation to the EU School Milk Scheme, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 5978/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The EU School Milk Scheme was introduced in 1977 and in the interim the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has been proactive to encourage uptake under the Scheme. This included writing on two occasions to the Chief Executive of each of the five Education and Library Boards (ELBS) and the Principals of all nursery and primary schools in the North. The letter outlined the operations of the Scheme and advised that milk can make an important contribution to a healthy balanced diet. It also encouraged those schools that did not provide drinking milk to pupils to consider doing so.

Following an amendment to the EU School Milk Scheme, which came into operation on 1 August 2008, DARD wrote to each ELB providing an Information Bulletin on the Scheme. The Information Bulletin inter alia advised that all participating schools must display a poster in the entrance hall advertising the Scheme. In addition the Information Bulletin was also placed on the DARD website.

During the year ended 31 March 2008 DARD awarded the Dairy Council for NI (DCNI) £33,150 under the DARD Regional Food Programme. This funding allowed for promotional activity primarily to encourage schools not taking school milk to participate in the EU School Milk Scheme and to communicate the benefits of taking school milk to parents of all P1 children.

This funding was complemented last year when the DCNI was awarded €284,739.77 EU funding towards an information programme which aims to reinforce the role of dairy products in our daily breakfast and to increase uptake of milk under the EU School Milk Scheme.

The programme commenced in October 2008 and it will use a mixture of radio and TV (both supported by PR activities), direct mail and school education to achieve its goal.

Rural Development Programme

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much the administration charge will be for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme Axis 3 through local Council clusters.
(AQW 5996/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Joint Council Committees will be permitted to utilise, by way of an administration budget, an amount equivalent to 20% of the funds disbursed on project grants. This means that for every £5 pounds of project spend £1 may be used towards administration. However Joint Council Committees in partnership with their LAGs may, with prudent financial management, assign a lesser percentage to administration and a greater amount to project expenditure. Therefore the final administration charge will be dependant upon the percentage drawn down in administration and the amount of grant awarded over the life of the programme.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the criteria used to assess applications for the Countryside Management Scheme was approved by European Union authorities.
(AQW 5997/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The forum that DARD is obliged to consult on selection criteria is the NIRDP Monitoring Committee. An environmental sub-group of the NIRDP Monitoring Committee was established. This group considered proposed ranking and selection criteria to ensure that the expenditure is targeted to achieve the greatest environmental benefit. The outcome of this consultation was then presented to the main Monitoring Committee of which EU officials are members. The Monitoring Committee were content with the proposals.

Private Forestry Industry

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what co-operation exists between her Department and the private forestry industry.
(AQW 5998/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department's Forest Service co-operates with a wide range of private forestry interests including representative bodies, businesses and individuals at a variety of different levels.

Private forestry industry stakeholders have played a key role in consultation on the development of forest policy and strategy which culminated in the publication of the Forestry Strategy, "A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth". The industry also plays an active role in response to more focused strategies.

Forest Service is in regular contact with ConFor, the main forestry organisation representing forestry contractors, wood processors and woodland owners, in relation to developing industry best practice and capacity. The scope of these contacts are wide ranging, from long term timber contracts, forest environment issues, where ConFor has a representative on the Native Woodland Group, and encouraging forest expansion under the Rural Development Programme.

Forest Service engages with private timber customers and contractors on the operational delivery of the Forestry Programme through specific contractual agreements with individual customers and contractors. Forest Service also engages with private landowners and their agents in relation to providing advice and assistance to encourage creation of new woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme. The wider Department also engages with the private forestry industry through an Agricultural Stakeholder's Forum for Renewable Energy and the Renewable Energy Research Programme, both in relation to the development of wood biomass for an energy end-use.

Farm Nutrient Management Scheme

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if sufficient financial resources are in place to meet outstanding Farm Nutrient Management Scheme claims. (AQW 5999/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I can confirm that all valid outstanding Farm Nutrient Management Scheme claims will be paid.

Feasibility Study of the Halfpenny River

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for a timescale for the completion of the feasibility study of the Halfpenny River, designated under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 at Knockramer Meadows area in Lurgan. (AQW 6006/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Rivers Agency is undertaking a programme of investigations of the numerous river related flooding incidents arising from the August 2008 event, including flooding from the Halfpenny River. The feasibility study is programmed for completion in late summer 2009.

Rural Businesses

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many rural businesses has her Department assisted in the North Antrim constituency; and (ii) how much has been invested in each business, over the past five years. (AQW 6037/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Since 2004-05 my Department has awarded non-agricultural financial assistance to 121 rural businesses in the North Antrim constituency under the auspices of the outgoing Rural Development Programme, which incorporated the Building Sustainable Prosperity, Peace II, INTERREG IIIA and LEADER + initiatives. This totals up to an overall investment of £2,822,123.96 over the period. A detailed table is available if required.

In addition, some £381,197.50 was distributed indirectly through LEADER groups. In this case it is not possible to provide a full breakdown without incurring disproportionate cost.

I am pleased to report that £100 million is available under Axis 3 of the RDP 2007-2013, and many of the measures within this Axis will target rural businesses.

Agricultural Links

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what actions her Department has taken to develop agricultural links, including business and marketing links, between North Antrim and the corresponding area of Scotland. (AQW 6038/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Neither I nor my officials have taken any action to develop agricultural links of this nature between North Antrim and the corresponding area of Scotland.

Departmental Accounts

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) to outline the process by which her Department's accounts are audited; (ii) who audits her Department's accounts; and (iii) to detail her Department's final audited accounts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6350/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) Outline the process by which her Department's accounts are audited
- The NI Audit Office (NIAO) agrees an Audit Strategy with the Department. This contains key deliverables and dates.
 - The Department submits interim accounts for the 9 months to 31 December, for audit, in February.
 - In late May, the Department submits draft accounts for the 12 months to 31 March, for audit.

- There is an appropriate internal quality review process at all key stages.
 - In June the NIAO clears the accounts and agrees with the Department a report to management, identifying any emergent issues.
 - In late June the Departmental Accounting Officer signs the Final Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General certifies them for the NIAO.
 - The Annual Report and Accounts are laid in the Assembly, in July.
- (ii) Who audits her Department's accounts?
The NIAO is responsible for auditing the Department's accounts.
- (iii) Detail her Department's final audited accounts, in each of the last three years.
The Department's 'Annual Report & Accounts' is laid in the NI Assembly and subsequently published. Copies of these documents are available in the Assembly library.
Copies of historical Annual Resource Accounts are also available on DARDs internet website. (Access via, www.dardni.gov.uk and follow links to Home/Strategic Corporate Information/DARD Statistics/Publications & Forms/Publications Relating to Corporate Information/Accounts).

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Festivals and Events in East Antrim

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding his Department has provided for festivals and events in East Antrim since May 2007. (AQW 4890/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): My Department has awarded £324, 004 for festivals and events in East Antrim since May 2007.

Irish Language Groups

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the Irish language groups that have been funded by his Department; and (ii) the amount of funding provided to Irish language groups in the Lagan Valley constituency, over the last three years. (AQW 5779/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department does not fund individual Irish language groups; however Irish language groups can receive funding from Foras na Gaeilge.

Foras na Gaeilge does not hold the requested information on a constituency basis, however I have requested Foras na Gaeilge to start capturing the information in this format from 1 April 2009.

Foras na Gaeilge can however provide detailed information pertaining to specific Irish language groups upon request.

Ulster-Scots Projects

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many Ulster-Scots projects his Department has funded in the North Down constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 5834/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department through the Community Festival Fund has funded one Ulster-Scots project in the North Down Constituency over the past three years – Groomsport Eagle Wing Festival, £8,976 in the 2008/2009 year.

The Ulster-Scots Agency does not presently hold the requested information on a constituency basis. The Agency is currently reviewing its systems and procedures and as part of that I have asked the Agency to start capturing the information in this format from 1 April 2009.

The Agency can however provide detailed information pertaining to specific Ulster-Scots projects or events upon request.

North South Language Body

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps are being taken to obtain an explanation from the language body of the North/South bodies of why grant expenditure of £720,000 in 2000 did not have documentation. (AQW 5896/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The 2000 Accounts of the North/South Language Body were qualified.

The reason for qualification is included in the North/South Language Body Annual Report and Accounts which is in the Assembly library.

Following the qualification of the 2000 Accounts the Agencies of the North/South Language Body introduced a number of procedures and controls in relation to grant expenditures. These were approved by the Sponsor and Finance Departments and endorsed by the North/South Ministerial Council.

Russell Gaelic Union in Downpatrick

Mr J Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much grant aid his Department has given to the Russell Gaelic Union in Downpatrick, in each of the last ten years. (AQW 5930/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI has provided no exchequer funding to the Russell Gaelic Union in Downpatrick (RGU) over the last ten years. However, SNI made a £60,000 lottery award to the RGU in 2001 towards the construction of a new pitch.

Local Soccer Players

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he pledges to support and recognise the achievements of all local soccer players, whether playing for Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. (AQW 5955/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: As Minister with responsibility for sport in Northern Ireland I will continue to recognise the achievements of all athletes who represent Northern Ireland at National and International sporting events.

Irish and Ulster-Scots Funding

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made in reversing the historical disparity in funding between Irish and Ulster-Scots; and what further work he has planned to address this issue. (AQW 6062/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I am committed to addressing the disparity in funding between Irish and Ulster-Scots.

Through the implementation of the Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages it is my intention to ensure that both languages are given equal respect and recognition and that the development of one language must be considered within the context of an equitable approach to the other.

Traditional Arts Officer

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the analysis that took place which determined that the post of the Traditional Arts Officer will become a part time position, when currently it takes a number of officers to carry out the work. (AQW 6085/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The appointment of Arts Officers is a matter for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and is overseen by its Chief Executive and Council.

The Arts Council has advised that when assessing the weighting of a post, the volume of work associated with the case load of the particular art form area is considered. For example, the number of clients the officer will be dealing with, the number of meetings and events to be attended, as well as developmental issues.

Although there are two officers currently carrying the traditional arts portfolio while it is vacant, this is in addition to their current areas of responsibility.

The Arts Council has advised that this post has been in existence for over 20 years and has historically been a part-time one. However, it was full time when it was last filled in September 2007. This was to allow for additional responsibilities related to the planning and delivery of the traditional arts contribution to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington.

Ten Day Payment Policy

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what measures his Department has in place to ensure invoices are paid within ten days. (AQW 6125/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department has issued guidance internally and to its sponsored bodies and has requested that every effort be made to comply with the ten day payment policy.

The Department is committed to continuously improving its performance in this area. It has already contacted active suppliers who are still paid by payable order and asked them to convert to electronic funds transfer – this will reduce the time taken for payments to reach their bank accounts.

DCAL will also migrate its transaction processing to a shared services centre (AccountNI) in April 2009 and would anticipate that new business processes based around workflow and electronic documentation would make a further significant impact on turnaround times for invoice settlement.

Projects Planned for North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what are the (i) projects; and (ii) amounts of capital investment planned for the North Down constituency for (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11. (AQW 6156/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

DCAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

Ongoing and Planned Projects			
Name	Start Date	2009/10 Expenditure	2010/11 Expenditure
National Museums NI Capital Maintenance	Jan 2009	£1,653,000	£1,653,000
National Museums NI Security Systems	Oct 2008	£650,000	£0
National Museums NI Minor Operational Capital	Apr 2008	£100,000	£165,000
National Museums NI Commercial Infrastructure	To be agreed	£230,000	£125,000
Building Sport Programme Donaghadee Sailing Club	04/09/2008	£145,015	£0
Elite Facilities Programme North Down Borough Council - 50 metre pool	Subject to final business case	£195,000	£7,021,875

North South Language Body

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why the accounts of the North South Language Body have not been certified since 2003; and why there has been a delay given that the accounts for other North South Bodies have been certified up to 2006. (AQW 6161/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: At the North South Ministerial Council meeting in language sectoral format Ministers directed the Language Body to address the backlog in laying the Annual Reports and Accounts as a priority. The North South Language Body Annual Report and Accounts for the period ending 31 December 2004 was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both houses of the Oireachtas on 26 February 2009. The accounts for both Agencies for 2005 have been consolidated and will be laid before both parliaments when cleared by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Programme for Government Targets

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Education what risk assessment she has carried out on the Programme for Government targets. (AQW 4886/09)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Cuirtear san áireamh i gClár na Rioscaí Corparáide DE iad na rioscaí ard leibhéil maidir leis an Chlár um spriocanna an rialtais agus bíonn múnaitóireacht agus athbhreithniú déanta air seo go rialta ag Bord na Roinne agus ag Coiste um Bhainistíocht Rioscaí lena chinntiú go bhfuil na rialaithe cuí agus gníomhartha bainistíochta ann leis na rioscaí a bhainistiú agus a mhaolú.

High level risks in relation to delivery of the Programme for Government targets are included in the DE Corporate Risk Register which is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Departmental Board and the DE Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure that the appropriate controls and management actions are in place to manage and mitigate the risks. "DE fails to achieve relevant PSA targets" is recognised as a high level risk in the DE Corporate Risk Register. The DE Business Plan, which I approve, takes account of the actions my Department is taking to ensure delivery of the high level targets set out in the Programme for Government and mitigate risk. If there is a significant risk, or the likelihood of a significant risk materialising, I would be made aware of the fact.

Primary Schools

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many children were enrolled in primary schools in September 2008 who were of non-compulsory school age, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 5714/09)

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

The information requested is provided in the table below.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS WHO WERE OF NON-COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE BY ELB – 2008/09

Pupils aged under 4	ELB					Total
	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Total	1,322	1,820	1,785	1,974	1,912	8,813

Source: Annual school census

Note:

1. Figures include children in nursery, reception and Year 1 classes.
2. Pupils under age taken as those aged less than 4 at 1 July 2008.

School Pupils in Lagan Valley

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education how many pupils in (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the Lagan Valley constituency have a first language other than English. (AQW 5719/09)

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

The information requested is contained in the table below.

PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE AT PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE LAGAN VALLEY CONSTITUENCY – 2008/09

School level	Primary	Post primary	Total
No. of pupils with English as an additional language	222	95	317

Source: Annual school census.

Note:

1. Primary schools figure includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. A child with English as an additional language is defined as one for whom English is not their first language and who has significant difficulty with the English language and requires assistance.

East/ West Cooperation in Education

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the work she has undertaken to promote greater East/ West cooperation in education in 2008/09. (AQW 5907/09)

Minister of Education: I recognise the mutual benefits to our education systems of ongoing cooperation with my counterparts in the South and in Scotland, Wales and England.

In 2008/09, my Department has provided funding to the British Council to administer the East West Schools Programme and the Causeway Programme. The East West Schools Programme aims to build educational links on a tripartite basis, involving schools from across Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. The Causeway Programme is a youth exchange programme that was developed to strengthen and improve relationships between young people on these islands.

Officials from each of the eight British Irish Council administrations held a very successful inaugural meeting in Cardiff in January 2009 to discuss a new thematic strand on Early Years policy and to take forward work on a number of topics.

Bullying is unacceptable in our classrooms and in our society. The Department cannot solve this issue alone, and therefore continues to work in close partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations through its membership and funding of the local Anti-Bullying Forum. It is also a member of the British and Irish Anti-Bullying Forum and I had the pleasure of attending its meeting in September last year.

Officials from my Department continued to work with their counterparts in the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency to co-ordinate the development of policy for the respective teachers' pension schemes here and in England, Wales and Scotland.

Last year, the Department of Education and the Education and Training Inspectorate hosted an Autism Stocktake Event in Belfast, which included officials and inspectors from Wales, Scotland and the south of Ireland. The event provided a forum to consider autism provision across the education sector and exchange examples of good practice in a strategic context.

Bíonn oifigigh ón Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oiliúna ag bualadh lena gcomhghleacaithe sa deisceart, i Sasana, in Albain agus sa Bhreatain Bheag go rialta le heolas a chomhroinnt ar réimse ceisteanna oideachais. Bíonn siad ag comhoibriú ar roinnt seimineár agus sprioc-chigearachtaí.

Officials from the Education and Training Inspectorate meet regularly with their counterparts in the south, England, Scotland and Wales to share information on a range of educational issues. They also collaborate on a variety of seminars and targeted inspections.

Childcare and Early Years Interventions

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Education (i) what assessment has been made of the need for childcare and early years interventions; and (ii) what statutory provision exists for childcare and early years interventions, in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 5927/09)

Minister of Education:

- (i) The subject of Childcare incorporates a range of issues including the needs of children, the needs of parents, the affordability of childcare, regulations and standards of provision, the shared focus on care and education, and access to services. As such, aspects of childcare are the responsibility of several government departments. The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has established a Sub-Group on Poverty which has been tasked with carrying out an assessment of the role and need for childcare. This Sub-Group will be reporting shortly to the Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People.

The evidence paper produced for the development of the Early Years Strategy has indicated the importance of early identification of any needs an individual child may be experiencing. This will be reflected in the Early Years Strategy currently being drafted.

- (ii) Taispeánann an tábla thíos suíomh na Naíonraí agus na nAonad Naoínraí, i Limistéir Athnuachana Comharsanachta, miondealaithe de réir Toghcheantair Pharlaiminte.
- (ii) The attached table shows the position of Nursery Schools and Nursery Units, in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, broken down by Parliamentary Constituency.

NURSERY SCHOOLS BY NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL AREAS AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY - 2008/09

DENI Ref	School Name	Pc	NRA
2116348	Trench Road Nursery School	Foyle	Waterside
1136106	St Martin's Nursery School	Belfast West	Upper Springfield_Whiterock
1136228	St Bernadette's Nursery School	Belfast West	Upper Springfield_Whiterock
1136349	Matt Talbot Nursery School	Belfast West	Upper Springfield_Whiterock
1136353	St Maria Goretti Nursery School	Belfast West	Upper Springfield_Whiterock
4116216	King's Road Nursery School	Belfast East	Tullycarnet
2116266	Bligh's Lane Nursery School	Foyle	Triax
2116232	Strathfoyle Nursery School	Foyle	Strathfoyle
2116333	Ballycolman Nursery School	West Tyrone	Strabane
1110001	Arellian Nursery School	Belfast South	South West Belfast
1136383	St Oliver Plunkett Nursery School	Belfast West	Outer West Belfast
2116023	The Academy Nursery School	Foyle	Outer West
2116267	Carnhill Nursery School	Foyle	Outer North
2116336	Galliagh Nursery School	Foyle	Outer North
5136342	St Malachy's Nursery School	Newry And Armagh	Newry
5136631	Drumnamoe Nursery School	Upper Bann	Lurgan
2116628	Limavady Nursery School	East Derry	Limavady
1110036	New Lodge Nursery School	Belfast North	Inner North Belfast
1116011	Victoria Nursery School	Belfast North	Inner North Belfast
1116157	Stanhope Street Nursery School	Belfast North	Inner North Belfast
1136230	Holy Family Nursery School	Belfast North	Inner North Belfast
1110002	Mcarthur Nursery School	Belfast East	Inner East Belfast
1110003	Edenderry Nursery School	Belfast North	Greater Shankill

DENI Ref	School Name	Pc	NRA
1110025	Tudor Lodge Nursery School	Belfast North	Greater Shankill
1110038	Shaftesbury Nursery School	Belfast West	Greater Shankill
1116155	Hope Nursery School	Belfast West	Greater Shankill
1136302	St Paul's Nursery School	Belfast West	Falls_Clonard
1136340	St Peter's Nursery School	Belfast West	Falls_Clonard
1136603	The Cathedral Nursery School	Belfast West	Falls_Clonard
4116176	Downpatrick Nursery School	South Down	Downpatrick
4136212	St Patrick's Convent Nursery	South Down	Downpatrick
1116159	Oldpark Nursery School	Belfast North	Crumlin_Ardoyne
1136360	Holy Cross Nursery School	Belfast North	Crumlin_Ardoyne
4136286	Good Shepherd Nursery School	Belfast West	Colin
4136368	St Luke's Nursery School	Belfast West	Colin
4136481	St Kieran's Nursery School	Belfast West	Colin
4136606	St Therese Nursery School	Belfast West	Colin
3116215	Kylemore Nursery School	East Derry	Coleraine West
3116263	Ballysally Nursery School	East Derry	Coleraine East
3116220	Ballyclare Nursery School	South Antrim	Ballyclare
5110017	Railway Street Nursery School	Newry And Armagh	Armagh
1136314	St Teresa's Nursery School	Belfast West	Andersonstown
1136316	Holy Child Nursery School	Belfast West	Andersonstown

Source: school census

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH NURSERY CLASSES BY NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL AREAS AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY - 2008/09

DENI Ref	School Name	Pc	NRA
2036288	Good Shepherd Ps And Nursery School	Foyle	Waterside
2016124	Ashlea Ps	Foyle	Waterside
1016532	Wheatfield Ps	Belfast North	Upper Ardoyne / Ballysillan
1016076	Ballysillan Ps	Belfast North	Upper Ardoyne / Ballysillan
2036475	Longtower Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
2016564	Fountain Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
2030373	Nazareth House Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
2036555	St Eugene's Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
2030364	Rosemount Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
2030381	Holy Child Ps	Foyle	Triax - Cityside
3010895	Rathcoole Ps	Belfast North	Rathcoole
3010827	Whitehouse Ps	Belfast North	Rathcoole
5011129	Hart Memorial Ps	Upper Bann	Portadown North West
2036472	Holy Family Ps	Foyle	Outer West Derry
2010380	Londonderry Model Ps	Foyle	Outer West Derry

DENI Ref	School Name	Pc	NRA
2016071	Greenhaw Ps	Foyle	Outer North Derry
2036142	St Brigid's Ps	Foyle	Outer North Derry
2036084	Steelstown Vol Maintained Ps	Foyle	Outer North Derry
2036574	Bunscoil Cholmcille	Foyle	Outer North Derry
2036227	St Pauls Ps, Slievemore	Foyle	Outer North Derry
5031340	St Joseph's Convent Ps	Newry And Armagh	Newry
5031158	St Patrick's Ps	Newry And Armagh	Newry
5036633	St Francis Ps	Upper Bann	Lurgan
5011127	Carrick Ps	Upper Bann	Lurgan
5010992	Lurgan Model Ps	Upper Bann	Lurgan
2032287	Termoncanice Ps	East Derry	Limavady
1036042	St Vincent De Paul Ps	Belfast North	Ligoniel
1036466	St Malachy's Ps	Belfast South	Inner South Belfast
1046641	Scoil An Droichid	Belfast South	Inner South Belfast
1010283	Grove Ps	Belfast North	Inner North Belfast
1036505	St Matthew's Ps	Belfast East	Inner East Belfast
1010269	Avoniel Ps	Belfast East	Inner East Belfast
1010267	Nettlefield Ps	Belfast South	Inner East Belfast
1010146	Euston Street Ps	Belfast East	Inner East Belfast
1016604	Harmony Ps	Belfast West	Greater Shankill
1016059	Blackmountain Ps	Belfast West	Greater Shankill
1046571	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál	Belfast West	Falls / Clonard
1036630	St Clare's Primary School	Belfast West	Falls / Clonard
2036632	Holy Trinity Ps	Fermanagh And South Tyro	Enniskillen
1056483	Cliftonville Integrated Ps	Belfast North	Crumlin / Ardoyne
4036134	St Mark's Ps	Belfast West	Colin
4036591	Our Lady Queen Of Peace Ps	Belfast West	Colin
5011190	Tullygally Ps	Upper Bann	Brownlow
5031184	St Anthony's Ps	Upper Bann	Brownlow
5016080	Drumgor Ps	Upper Bann	Brownlow
5036101	St Brendan's Ps	Upper Bann	Brownlow
4016002	Kilcooley Ps	North Down	Bangor
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	North Antrim	Ballymena
1036576	Holy Child Ps	Belfast West	Andersonstown
1046501	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	Belfast West	Andersonstown

Source: school census

Down High School in Downpatrick

Mr J Wells asked the Minister of Education why no planning application has been submitted for the new Down High School in Downpatrick. (AQW 5929/09)

Minister of Education: Is ceist í pleanáil eastát na scoileanna rialaithe a bhaineann le Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt (SEELB) sa chéad dul síos.

The planning of the controlled schools' estate is a matter for the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) in the first instance.

The SEELB has identified a suitable site for Down High School. However an issue arose with respect to the protection of paupers' graves on the site which led to the SEELB engaging a firm of archaeologists to conduct some trial excavations in the area. Remains were found but have been left in situ. The Board is currently awaiting a report from the archaeologists before they formulate a way forward on the future treatment of this area.

The Board has advised that it is hoped the planning application will be lodged in a few weeks time.

'STOP' Group

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education if she has received any correspondence from the 'STOP' group. (AQW 6007/09)

Minister of Education: Tá iarratas ar chruinniú faighte agam ón ghrúpa 'STOP' le plé a dhéanamh ar an inní atá ar na tuismitheoirí seo faoi na socrúithe d'Aistriú 2010.

I have received a request from the 'STOP' group for a meeting to discuss concerns these parents have about arrangements for Transfer 2010.

School Facilities in Lagan Valley

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to upgrade school facilities in the Lagan Valley constituency in 2009. (AQW 6022/09)

Minister of Education: (a) Tá scéimeanna mhionoibreacha á bpleanáil faoi láthair le háiseanna sna scoileanna seo a leanas a fheabhsú sa bhliain airgeadais 2009/10 faoi réir dhóthain áiseanna bheith ar fáil.

Schemes of minor works are currently in planning to improve facilities at the following schools in the 2009/10 financial year subject to sufficient resources being available.

	Project
Friends School, Lisburn	Repairs to roof Refurbishment of toilets Boiler plant
Wallace High School, Lisburn	Air conditioning for computer suite
St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn	Upgrade of heating system Refurbishment of toilets Resurfacing of playground Replacement of fencing Improvements to foyer/entrance
St Aloysius Primary School, Lisburn	Increase in height of balustrades in stairways. Safety fencing in play area Replacement window sills Refurbishment of toilets
St Colman's Primary School, Dromore	Upgrade of CCTV
Fair Hill Primary School, Kinallen	Single nursery
Largymore Primary School, Lisburn	Provision of new classrooms
Barbour Nursery, Lisburn	Indoor communal area, parents room and kitchen

	Project
Killowen Primary School, Coleraine	Nursery unit
Moira Primary School	Nursery unit
Tonagh Primary School, Lisburn	Replacement mobile for reception class
Parkview Special School, Lisburn	Provision of school leavers unit Multi use games area
Brookfield Special School, Craigavon	Multi use games area and fencing

THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL BUILDING MINOR WORKS PROJECTS UNDERWAY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

	Project
Friends School, Lisburn	Covered play area
St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn	Provision of mat store
St Colman's Primary School, Dromore	Toilet refurbishment
Wallace High School, Lisburn	Security, health and safety and disabled access works.
Fair Hill Primary School	Classroom and Office extension
Dromore Central Primary School	Provision of double mobile

Major Works

Work on new school buildings for Ballinderry Primary School and Pond Park Primary School, Lisburn is currently underway and both are due to complete in 2009/10. Planning for new school buildings for St Colman's Primary School, Lambeg and Dromore Central Primary School are also currently being taken forward. Construction work on new school buildings for Brookefield Special School, Moira and Ballymacrickett Primary School, Glenavy has also been completed in recent months.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of mobile classrooms used for teaching in each school in the Lagan Valley Constituency. (AQW 6023/09)

Minister of Education: Táispeáintear sa tábla thíos áit agus líon na seomraí ranga sealadacha i dToghcheantar Lagan Valley.

A table representing the location and number of temporary classrooms in the Lagan Valley Constituency is shown below.

TEMPORARY TEACHING ROOMS IN THE LAGAN VALLEY CONSTITUENCY

School Type	School Name	Room Type	Number
Primary	Brownlee Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Seymour Hill Primary	Classroom	2
Primary	Tonagh Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Dromara Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Fort Hill Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Derriaghy Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Knockmore Primary	Classroom	3
Primary	Moira Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Killowen Primary	Classroom	2
Primary	Maghaberry Primary	Classroom	1

School Type	School Name	Room Type	Number
Primary	Ballymacash Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	Riverdale Primary	Classroom	1
Primary	St Joseph's Primary (Lisburn)	Classroom	1
Primary	St Colman's Primary (Moira)	Classroom	2
Primary	Hilden Integrated Primary	Classroom	2
Primary	Oakwood Integrated Primary	Classroom	1
Post-Primary	Laurelhill Community College	Classroom	6
Post-Primary	St Patrick's High	Classroom	2
Post-Primary	Fort Hill College	Classroom	4
Post-Primary	Wallace High	Classroom	4
Primary	Dromore Central Primary	Classroom	7
Primary	Fairhill Primary	SEN Room	1
Post-Primary	Dromore High	Classroom	5

School Building Projects in Lagan Valley

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of school building projects underway in the Lagan Valley constituency. (AQW 6024/09)

Minister of Education: (a) Tá scéimeanna mhionoibreacha á bpleanáil faoi láthair le háiseanna sna scoileanna seo a leanas a fheabhsú sa bhliain airgeadais 2009/10 faoi réir dhóthain áiseanna bheith ar fáil.

Schemes of minor works are currently in planning to improve facilities at the following schools in the 2009/10 financial year subject to sufficient resources being available.

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Fair Hill Primary School, Kinallen	Single nursery
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Barbour Nursery, Lisburn	Indoor communal area, parents room and kitchen
Killowen Primary School, Coleraine	Nursery unit
Moira Primary School	Nursery unit
Tonagh Primary School, Lisburn	Replacement mobile for reception class

	Project
Parkview Special School, Lisburn	Provision of school leavers unit Multi use games area
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First Language of Pupils

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 5333/09, what is her assessment of the adequacy of the provision for pupils whose first language is not English. (AQW 6029/09)

Minister of Education: De réir an daonáirimh a rinneadh i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2008 bhí 6,995 dalta nuathagtha ann, a raibh an Béarla mar theanga bhreise (EAL) acu.

According to the October 2008 census there were 6,995 newcomer pupils, who have English as an additional language (EAL).

I am pleased that my Department is now ready to publish a formal policy to help schools support all newcomer pupils, regardless of their first language. This policy will ensure such pupils acquire the language of instruction to enable them to access the school curriculum and partake in every aspect of school life through building upon the capacity and skills of the school workforce as part of the overall raising standards agenda.

My Department has funded the setting up of the regional Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) across the Education and Library Boards, to strengthen and improve support to newcomer pupils, by ensuring that a consistent level of support and specialist advice is provided to all grant-aided and special schools. In 2008/09, this service received £1,015,000 of funding.

In addition to this, my Department will continue to fund schools directly via the EAL factor of the Common Funding Formula (CFF) for each newcomer pupil who has significant language acquisition needs. In the 2008/09 financial year the EAL factor was £983 per newcomer pupil, giving a total of £5.5 million of this funding that was allocated to schools.

The key support services of the IDS that are currently available include diversity coordinators, interpreting and translating services, a multi-lingual website for teachers and newcomer parents, a toolkit for primary schools and continuous professional development for teaching staff. The future work programme will include developing toolkits for post-primary, special and nursery schools, aids for schools in initial and continuing assessment and specific training programmes aimed at increasing the capacity or skills of the teaching workforce.

An Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) survey of the support schools and the IDS are providing was completed at the end of 2008 and the report will be published soon. In addition the introduction of the 'unique pupil number' last year will allow the generation of data to assess the achievement levels of newcomer pupils.

First Language of Pupils

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education if her Department has any plans to increase funding for schools who have pupils whose first language is not English. (AQW 6031/09)

Minister of Education: Soláthraíonn mo Roinn cistiú go díreach chuig scoileanna, trí Bhéarla mar theanga breise (EAL) atá mar chuid den Fhoirmle Chómhainithe, a ligeann dóibh tacaíocht a thabhairt do dhaltáí nua-thagtha.

My Department provides funding direct to schools, through the English as an additional language (EAL) factor of the Common Funding Formula (CFF), to allow them to support their newcomer pupils.

The funds to schools relate directly to the number of newcomer children identified in the school census. This particular method of funding is therefore flexible and responsive. The EAL factor is an additional 0.5 of the basic Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) cash value. This was £983 for each full-time newcomer pupil in 2008/09, giving a total of £5.5million. In the forthcoming 2009/10 financial year, as the EAL factor has risen to £1,010 per newcomer pupil, the total funding to be allocated will be over £6.9million.

In addition, funding is provided to Education and Library Boards, for the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS), to enable key services to be provided to schools. In 2008/09 it received £1,015,000 and in the forthcoming 2009/10 financial year, it will receive over £1.1million.

Composite Classes

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Education (i) how many primary schools have composite classes; (ii) where these classes are located; (iii) how many pupils are affected; and (iv) how this situation has altered over the past five years, in the North Antrim constituency. (AQW 6039/09)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sna táblaí thíos.

The information requested is listed in the tables below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH COMPOSITE CLASSES IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – 2004/05

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010466	Longstone Ps	3	60
3010572	Carrowreagh Ps	3	71
3010594	Garryduff Ps	3	62
3010722	Lisnamurrigan Ps	2	27
3010726	Dunseverick Ps	2	62
3010780	Kirkinriola Ps	3	72
3010781	Harryville Ps	4	95
3010787	Lislagan Ps	3	73
3010795	Landhead Ps	3	55
3010796	Eden Ps	3	66
3010804	Straidbilly Ps	3	61
3010818	Moorfields Ps	1	29
3010825	Carnaghts Ps	3	71
3010826	The Diamond Ps	3	81
3010834	Clough Ps	3	79
3010842	The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps	3	67
3010866	Ballymoney Ps	3	41
3010873	Bushmills Ps	3	75

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010875	Ballymena Ps	2	55
3010878	Kilmoyle Ps	2	47
3010891	Fourtowns Ps	3	73
3010893	Knockahollet Ps	2	40
3013310	Broughshane Ps	3	80
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	3	75
3013322	Camphill Ps	1	22
3013325	Leaney Ps	4	111
3013333	Ballycastle Ps	4	82
3016040	Armoy Ps	3	61
3016063	Dunclug Ps	3	66
3016125	Rasharkin Ps	3	58
3016129	Carniny Ps	3	80
3016171	Ballee Ps	4	87
3016260	Cloughmills Ps	3	61
3016444	Hazelbank Ps	2	37
3016447	Balnamore Ps	4	87
3016594	Bushvalley Ps	2	60
3030438	Millquarter Ps	3	80
3030588	St Mary's Ps, Rathlin	1	3
3030621	St Mary's Ps, Portglenone	1	19
3030625	St Mary's Ps Glenravel	3	75
3030708	Glenann Ps	3	53
3030719	St Olcan's Ps	3	65
3030800	Barnish Ps	4	86
3030836	Braid Ps	2	28
3030888	St Louis' Convent Ps	2	49
3030889	St Patrick's Ps, Augher-Cloney	2	26
3030890	St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills	4	84
3030898	St Anne's Ps, Ballymena	4	83
3033302	All Saints Ps	1	20
3033311	Glenravel Ps	4	100
3033320	St Patrick's Ps, Rasharkin	2	49
3033326	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymoney	2	20
3036072	St Joseph's Ps, Ahoghill	2	24
3036128	St Mary's Ps, Ballykeel	3	53
3036131	St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe	3	58
3036154	St Patrick's Ps, Loughguile	3	79
3036243	St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy	3	73

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3036250	St Joseph's Ps, Ballymena	5	86
3036268	St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun	3	77
3046653	Bunscoil An Chaistil	3	43
3066551	Braidside Integrated Ps	2	55

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH COMPOSITE CLASSES IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – 2005/06

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010466	Longstone Ps	3	64
3010572	Carrowreagh Ps	3	69
3010594	Garryduff Ps	3	50
3010722	Lisnamurrigan Ps	2	31
3010726	Dunseverick Ps	1	25
3010780	Kirkinriola Ps	3	72
3010781	Harryville Ps	4	91
3010787	Lislagan Ps	4	93
3010795	Landhead Ps	3	61
3010796	Eden Ps	4	83
3010804	Straidbilly Ps	4	74
3010818	Moorfields Ps	1	30
3010825	Carnaghts Ps	1	19
3010826	The Diamond Ps	3	72
3010834	Clough Primary School	3	78
3010842	The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps	3	52
3010866	Ballymoney Ps	3	42
3010873	Bushmills Ps	4	94
3010875	Ballymena Ps	3	87
3010878	Kilmoyle Ps	1	27
3010891	Fourtowns Ps	4	105
3010893	Knockahollet Ps	3	59
3013310	Broughshane Ps	4	118
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	2	55
3013322	Camphill Ps	1	22
3013325	Leaney Ps	4	114
3013333	Ballycastle Ps	3	72
3016040	Armoy Ps	3	59
3016063	Dunclug Ps	1	22
3016125	Rasharkin Ps	3	57
3016129	Carniny Ps	4	105

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3016171	Ballee Ps	4	84
3016260	Cloughmills Ps	4	75
3016444	Hazelbank Ps	2	45
3016447	Balnamore Ps	3	69
3016594	Bushvalley Ps	2	59
3030438	Millquarter Ps	4	102
3030588	St Mary's Ps, Rathlin	1	3
3030625	St Mary's Ps Glenravel	3	71
3030708	Glenann Ps	3	46
3030719	St Olcan's Ps	3	62
3030800	Barnish Ps	4	94
3030836	Braid Ps	2	28
3030888	St Louis' Convent Ps	2	53
3030889	St Patrick's Ps Aughercloney	2	26
3030890	St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills	3	65
3030898	St Anne's Ps, Ballymena	3	66
3033302	All Saints Ps	2	42
3033311	Glenravel Ps	4	109
3033320	St Patrick's Ps, Rasharkin	2	46
3033326	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymoney	2	21
3036072	St Joseph's Ps, Ahoghill	2	26
3036128	St Mary's Ps, Ballykeel	3	49
3036131	St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe	2	53
3036243	St Joseph's Ps, Loughguile	2	45
3036250	St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy	4	77
3036268	St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun	3	69
3046653	Bunscoil An Chaistil	3	42
3066551	Braidside Integrated Ps	2	54

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH COMPOSITE CLASSES IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – 2006/07

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010466	Longstone Ps	3	56
3010572	Carrowreagh Ps	2	37
3010594	Garryduff Ps	3	63
3010726	Dunseverick Ps	2	51
3010780	Kirkinriola Ps	3	59
3010781	Harryville Ps	4	103
3010787	Lislagan Ps	3	74

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010795	Landhead Ps	3	55
3010796	Eden Ps	3	72
3010804	Straidbilly Ps	3	58
3010825	Carnaghts Ps	1	21
3010826	The Diamond Ps	4	93
3010834	Clough Primary School	5	124
3010842	The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps	3	62
3010866	Ballymoney Ps	3	42
3010873	Bushmills Ps	4	94
3010878	Kilmoyle Ps	2	48
3010891	Fourtowns Ps	4	101
3010893	Knockahollet Ps	3	64
3013310	Broughshane Ps	3	84
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	3	64
3013322	Camphill Ps	1	23
3013325	Leaney Ps	4	108
3013333	Ballycastle Ps	3	53
3016040	Armoy Ps	3	57
3016063	Dunclug Ps	2	47
3016125	Rasharkin Ps	3	62
3016129	Carniny Ps	5	135
3016171	Ballee Ps	3	58
3016260	Cloughmills Ps	3	63
3016440	Portglenone Ps	1	29
3016444	Hazelbank Ps	2	49
3016447	Balnamore Ps	3	70
3030438	Millquarter Ps	3	80
3030588	St Mary's Ps, Rathlin	1	4
3030625	St Mary's Ps Glenravel	3	74
3030708	Glenann Ps	3	48
3030719	St Olcan's Ps	3	55
3030800	Barnish Ps	4	89
3030836	Braid Ps	2	24
3030889	St Patrick's Ps Aughercloney	2	26
3030890	St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills	4	83
3030898	St Anne's Ps, Ballymena	3	62
3033302	All Saints Ps	1	19
3033311	Glenravel Ps	3	73
3033326	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymoney	2	20

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3036072	St Joseph's Ps, Ahoghill	2	17
3036131	St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe	2	45
3036243	St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy	2	45
3036250	St Joseph's Ps, Ballymena	4	73
3036268	St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun	3	69
3046653	Bunscoil An Chaistil	4	71
3066551	Braidside Integrated Ps	2	56

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH COMPOSITE CLASSES IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – 2007/08

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010466	Longstone Ps	3	57
3010572	Carrowreagh Ps	3	59
3010594	Garryduff Ps	3	55
3010780	Kirkinriola Ps	4	89
3010781	Harryville Ps	5	103
3010787	Lislagan Ps	4	94
3010795	Landhead Ps	3	48
3010796	Eden Ps	3	81
3010804	Straidbilly Ps	4	81
3010825	Carnaghts Ps	1	18
3010826	The Diamond Ps	4	98
3010834	Clough Primary School	1	30
3010842	The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps	4	73
3010866	Ballymoney Ps	2	15
3010873	Bushmills Ps	3	64
3010878	Kilmoyle Ps	2	49
3010891	Fourtowns Ps	4	100
3010893	Knockahollet Ps	3	66
3013310	Broughshane Ps	3	81
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	2	43
3013322	Camphill Ps	1	25
3013325	Leaney Ps	4	108
3016040	Armoy Ps	3	50
3016063	Dunclug Ps	2	50
3016125	Rasharkin Ps	3	60
3016129	Carniny Ps	3	79
3016171	Ballee Ps	3	73
3016260	Cloughmills Ps	2	35

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3016440	Portglenone Ps	1	30
3016444	Hazelbank Ps	2	43
3016447	Balnamore Ps	4	89
3030438	Millquarter Ps	3	76
3030588	St Mary's Ps, Rathlin	1	4
3030625	St Mary's Ps Glenravel	3	64
3030708	Glenann Ps	3	52
3030719	St Olcan's Ps	3	53
3030800	Barnish Ps	4	91
3030836	Braid Ps	2	23
3030889	St Patrick's Ps Aughercloney	2	5
3030890	St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills	3	70
3030898	St Anne's Ps, Ballymena	3	65
3033311	Glenravel Ps	2	53
3033320	St Patrick's Ps, Rasharkin	1	29
3033326	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymoney	2	20
3036072	St Joseph's Ps, Ahoghill	2	18
3036131	St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe	2	56
3036243	St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy	1	24
3036268	St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun	3	59
3036666	St Colmcille's Ps	2	54
3036679	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymena	3	84
3046653	Bunscoil An Chaistil	3	57
3053333	Ballycastle Ps	4	85
3066551	Braidside Integrated Ps	1	30

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH COMPOSITE CLASSES IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – 2008/09

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010466	Longstone Ps	3	58
3010572	Carrowreagh Ps	3	68
3010594	Garryduff Ps	3	59
3010780	Kirkinriola Ps	4	99
3010781	Harryville Ps	3	57
3010787	Lislagan Ps	3	79
3010795	Landhead Ps	3	46
3010796	Eden Ps	3	69
3010804	Straidbilly Ps	2	37
3010825	Carnaghts Ps	1	20

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3010826	The Diamond Ps	4	99
3010834	Clough Primary School	2	53
3010842	The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps	4	72
3010866	Ballymoney Ps	3	29
3010873	Bushmills Ps	3	66
3010875	Ballymena Ps	1	30
3010878	Kilmoyle Ps	4	76
3010891	Fourtowns Ps	4	98
3010893	Knockahollet Ps	2	51
3013310	Broughshane Ps	3	74
3013315	Ballykeel Ps	2	47
3013322	Camphill Ps	1	27
3013325	Leaney Ps	3	83
3016040	Armoy Ps	3	53
3016063	Dunclug Ps	4	84
3016125	Rasharkin Ps	3	61
3016129	Carniny Ps	3	64
3016171	Ballee Ps	3	61
3016260	Cloughmills Ps	2	27
3016440	Portglenone Ps	1	32
3016444	Hazelbank Ps	2	45
3016447	Balnamore Ps	4	93
3030438	Millquarter Ps	1	24
3030588	St Mary's Ps, Rathlin	1	4
3030625	St Mary's Ps Glenravel	3	63
3030708	Glenann Ps	3	45
3030719	St Olcan's Ps	3	49
3030800	Barnish Ps	4	85
3030836	Braid Ps	2	18
3030890	St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills	4	74
3030898	St Anne's Ps, Ballymena	3	62
3033311	Glenravel Ps	1	19
3033326	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymoney	2	25
3036131	St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe	1	30
3036243	St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy	3	69
3036268	St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun	2	43
3036666	St Colmcille's Ps	1	25
3036679	St Brigid's Ps, Ballymena	2	53
3036683	St Paul's Ps, Ahoghill	3	27

DENI Ref	School Name	No. of Composite Classes	No. of Pupils Enrolled in Composite Classes
3046653	Bunscoil An Chaistil	3	65
3053333	Ballycastle Integrated Ps	2	39
3066551	Braidside Integrated Ps	1	31

Source: school census in the north of Ireland

Note:

1. Composite classes are those classes where children from two curriculum year groups are taught together. In some instances however, children from different year groups may be taught as a single year group. An example of this might be where a child from abroad is 'held back' a year, so that they can access the curriculum at a level appropriate to their previous educational experience. Some instances of these are included in the figures provided.
2. Figures relate to children in year 1 – 7 classes and include children in mainstream classes and special units within schools.

Children with Learning Disabilities

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Education what is the selection criteria used by Boards of Governors to admit children with learning disabilities. (AQW 6044/09)

Minister of Education: Is ceist a bhaineann leis an scoil féin í an cheist faoi na mionchritéir iontrála a úsáideann Bord Gobharnóirí na scoile ach ní bheadh tagairt ar leith do pháistí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu sna critéir iontrála, dairíre .

The exact nature of admissions criteria used by school Boards of Governors is a matter for each individual school, but admissions criteria would not in practice make specific reference to children with learning difficulties. Admissions criteria tend to be of the type described in the recently published Transfer 2010 guidance, and if children with learning difficulties require support on admission that can be catered for. If learning difficulties require a statement of special educational needs, such children would be placed on the basis of the content of that statement.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Education what are her Department's plans to provide a transfer system to post-primary schools for children who have statements. (AQW 6045/09)

Minister of Education: Mínítear sa treoir ar Aistriú 2010, a foilsíodh de bhun an ráitis a thug mé don Tionól ar 2 Feabhra 2009, nach mbeidh athrú ar bith ar na nósanna imeachta a bhíonn á bhfeidhmiú lasmuigh de nósanna imeachta oscailte rollaithe do pháistí a bhfuil ráiteas ar riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu, lena chinntiú go bhfaighidh na páistí sin an áit scoile is oiriúnaí dóibh.

The Transfer 2010 guidance published on foot of my 2 February 2009 statement to the Assembly explains that the procedures that operate outside of the open enrolment procedures for children in receipt of a statement of special educational needs will continue unchanged, in order to ensure that such children are provided with the most appropriate school placement.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Education to list the schools which have indicated that they will conduct their own entrance examinations in 2010. (AQW 6055/09)

Minister of Education: Is iad Lumen Christi College agus Slemish College an dá scoil atá i ndiaidh a chur in iúl dom go mbeidh scrúduithe iontrála d'Aistriú 2010 acu.

The two schools that have indicated to me that they intend offering entrance examinations for Transfer 2010 are Lumen Christi College and Slemish College.

Primary Schools in Upper Bann

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the total amount of finance allocated as ring-fenced in each of the last three years to primary schools in Upper Bann; and (ii) the amount underspent and returned to her Department. (AQW 6064/09)

Minister of Education: Sonraítear sa tábla thíos na méideanna imfhálaithe a dáileadh chuig bunscoileanna na Banna Uachtar i ngach bliain le trí bliana anuas agus na méideanna nár caitheadh ag gach deireadh bliana.

The table below provides details of the ring-fenced amounts which have been allocated to Upper Bann primary schools during each of the last three years and the amounts unspent at each year end. All funding allocated to schools and unspent at the end of the financial year is available for schools to use in future years for the purposes it was intended and is not therefore returned to my Department.

£000'S

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Ring-fenced Funding	1,419	1,835	1,559
Amount under spent /(overspent)		352	93

SELB delegates earmarked funds directly to schools and monitors expenditure on the basis of educational initiative outcomes. On that basis over the 3 years concerned the only reported underspends from Upper Bann primary schools were in relation to the extended schools initiative, the details of which are included on the table.

Our Lady's & St Mochua's Primary School, Derrynoose

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to assist the provision of an additional classroom at Our Lady's & St Mochua's Primary School, Derrynoose, given the rise in admissions and the long term accommodation difficulties with the current Primary 5 class. (AQW 6091/09)

Minister of Education: Cé nach bhfuair an Roinn iarratas foirmiúil go fóill le haghaidh seomra ranga breise don scoil, tá oifigigh ar an eolas gur ardaíodh ceisteanna faoin chóiríocht atá ann anois.

Although my Department has not to date received formal application for an additional classroom for the school, officials are aware that issues have been raised about the current accommodation. The department is in contact with the CCMS on the position. If an application is submitted to the department it will be considered in line with the criteria set down for such applications.

Departmental Staff

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education where the health of an employee in her Department is at threat, would she give priority to that person for a move to more suitable employment. (AQW 6096/09)

Minister of Education: Nuair a chuirtear in iúl go bhfuil bagairt ann do shláinte aon fhostaithe, moltar don fhostaí dul i dteagmháil leis an Oifigeach Leasa le rátáil Leasa a fháil, rátáil a mbaintear úsáid aisti le tosaíocht ar an Lárliosta Aistrithe a thabhairt do bhaill foirne atá ag iarraidh aistriú chuig fostaíocht níos oiriúnaí.

Where it has been made known that the health of an employee is at threat, the employee is advised to contact the Welfare Officer for consideration of a Welfare rating which is used to prioritise staff on the Central Transfer List who wish to secure a move to more suitable employment.

Middletown Centre for Autism

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education, (i) how many children with autism have been admitted to the Middletown Centre for Autism; (ii) what the total cost of staff salaries and benefits is; and (iii) how many staff will be employed when the recently advertised additional seven posts are filled. (AQW 6104/09)

Minister of Education: In answer to part (i) of your question, the Middletown Centre for Autism is not yet in a position to accept referrals for its assessment services. The two key services to be provided by the Centre that

involve the referral of children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders are the Educational Assessment Service and the Learning Support Service. It is planned that the Educational Assessment Service will be modelled later this year on an outreach basis and that the Learning Support Service will come on stream in 2010 following the completion of the building programme.

The Centre currently offers the training and advisory service and the autism research and information service. The Centre has trained 624 professionals, north and south, since December 2007. Also, the Centre has commenced research in relation to data collection and the Centre has recently completed a review of literature on diet and its impact on autism.

In answer to part (ii) of your question, I have been informed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Centre that the total cost of staff salaries for the first year of operation April 2007- March 2008 was £219,284 and that the total cost for this current year April 2008 - February 2009 is £419,829. The costs of the Centre are shared on a north/south basis.

Ar deireadh, chuir an Príomhoifigeach Feidhmiúcháin in iúl dom fosta go mbeidh 24 ball foirne, idir lánaimseartha agus pháirtaimseartha, fostaithe ag an ionad nuair a bheidh na seacht bpost atá á bhfógrú faoi láthair líonta.

Finally, the Chief Executive Officer has also informed me that following successful recruitment of the seven posts currently advertised there will be 24 full and part-time members of staff employed by the Centre.

Middletown Centre for Autism

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education what activities have taken place at the Middletown Centre for Autism since 2005 and to detail the number of children on the Autism Spectrum that have directly benefited from these activities. (AQW 6105/09)

Minister of Education: Tá Ionad Uathachais Choillidh Chanannáin i mbun feidhme ó lú Aibreán 2007. Tá na seirbhísí atá a mholadh á dtabhairt isteach ar bhonn céimnitheach le bheith ag teacht le cur i gcrích an chláir um athchóiriú an fhoirgnimh.

The Middletown Centre for Autism has been in operation since 1st April 2007. The services proposed for the Centre are being phased in order to coincide with the completion of the building refurbishment programme. The Centre already offers the training and advisory service and the autism research and information service. The educational assessment service will be modelled during 2009.

The learning support service will be the fourth service to be offered, as it requires completion of the new building which is expected to be completed in 2010.

The following information has been supplied by the Chief Executive Officer of the Centre.

The Centre has already trained 624 professionals, north and south, over a total of 29 training courses to date in the following areas: ASD and co-morbidities; ASD and Mental Health; Sensory processing difficulties in ASD; Meeting the sensorimotor skills of children with ASD within the curriculum framework; PEP-3; TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (first training in England, Scotland, Wales or the north or south of Ireland); and TEACCH Practice and Research. All of the training has been evaluated and feedback from the trainees has been very positive.

The education professionals trained will use the knowledge and skills gained from the training in their daily work with children and young people with autism, throughout Ireland.

Research has already commenced in relation to data collection and the Centre has recently completed a review of literature on diet and its impact on autism and will shortly publish their findings in the form of an information leaflet.

The Centre is also developing its capacity as an information resource and is already offering significant reference resources in the form of books and access to academic journals for professionals.

Distribution of Department Publications

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education if she will ensure that MLAs have the choice of receiving reports and consultation documents in either electronic or hard copy form. (AQW 6110/09)

Minister of Education:

Maidir le dáileadh cháipéisí chomhairliúcháin agus foilsiúcháin eile, Leanann mo Roinn na bealaí dáilte comhaontaithe chuig ionadaithe polaitíochta agus teagmhálaithe parlaiminteacha mar atá sonraithe sa Treoir OFMDFM ar Dháileadh Fhoilsiúcháin agus Cáipéisí Chomhairliúcháin na Roinne mar chuid den nós imeachta a bhaineann le ‘Páipéir curtha i láthair’ sa Tionól.

In distributing consultation documents and other publications, my Department follows the agreed distribution channels to political representatives and parliamentary contacts, specified in the OFMDFM Guidance on the Distribution of Departmental Publications and Consultation Documents by the “Papers Presented” procedure in the Assembly. In addition, the Department informs MLAs by letter of consultations undertaken by the Department and where they can obtain copies, including electronically, from the Department’s website.

Composite Classes

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education which primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area operate composite classes. (AQW 6115/09)

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

The information requested is contained in the table below.

Primary schools with composite classes in the North Eastern Education and Library Board 2008/09**School Name**

- Tildarg Ps
- Longstone Ps
- Carnalbanagh Ps
- Larne And Inver Ps
- Duneane Ps
- Straid Ps
- Carrowreagh Ps
- Garryduff Ps
- Parkgate Ps
- Creavery Ps
- Doagh Ps
- Mullaghdubh Ps
- Kirkinriola Ps
- Harryville Ps
- Lislagan Ps
- Landhead Ps
- Eden Ps
- Ballynure Ps
- Straidbilly Ps
- Glynn Ps
- Ballycarry Ps
- Mallusk Ps
- Greenisland Ps
- Groggan Ps
- Carnaghts Ps
- The Diamond Ps
- Whitehouse Ps
- Clough Primary School

- The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Ps
- Portrush Ps
- Upper Ballyboley Ps
- Crumlin Ps
- Sunnylands Ps
- Abbots Cross Ps
- Ballymoney Ps
- Moyle Ps
- BushmiLls Ps
- Ballymena Ps
- Kilmoyle Ps
- Straidhavern Ps
- King's Park Ps
- Fourtowns Ps
- Ballytober Ps
- Knockahollet Ps
- Rathcoole Ps
- Culcrow Ps
- Cullycapple Ps
- Hezlett Ps
- Tobermore Ps
- Ampertaine Ps
- Portstewart Ps
- Drumard Ps
- Magherafelt Controlled Ps
- Kilrea Ps
- Cullnady Ps
- Castleroe Ps
- Bellaghy Ps
- Maghera Ps
- Broughshane Ps
- Ballykeel Ps
- Camphill Ps
- Leaney Ps
- Ballycraigy Ps
- Toreagh Ps
- Kilross Ps
- Castledawson Ps
- Silverstream Ps
- Armoy Ps
- Gorran Ps
- Parkhall Ps
- Dunclug Ps
- Garvagh Ps
- Rasharkin Ps
- Carniny Ps

- Ballee Ps
- Woodlawn Ps
- AsHgrove Ps
- Earlview Ps
- Ballysally Ps
- Cloughmills Ps
- Cairncastle Ps
- Knockloughrim Ps
- Portglenone Ps
- Hazelbank Ps
- Balnamore Ps
- Creggan Ps
- Millquarter Ps
- St Patrick's Ps, Portrush
- St Mary's Ps, Ballycastle
- St Mary's Ps, Glenravel
- Glenann Ps
- Carlane Ps
- St Olcan's Ps
- Barnish Ps
- Moneynick Ps
- Braid Ps
- St Macnisius' Ps, Tannaghmore
- St Brigid's Ps, Cloughmills
- St Anne's Ps, Corkey
- Seaview Ps
- St Anthony's Ps, Larne
- Altayeskey Ps
- St Brigid's Ps, Tirkane
- Ballyhackett Ps
- St Trea's Ps
- Knocknagin Ps
- St Columba's Ps, GarvagH
- St Columb's Ps (Cullion)
- St Colum's Ps, Portstewart
- Ballynease Ps
- St Columba's Ps, Magherafelt
- St Eoghan's Ps, Magherafelt
- St Mary's Ps, Draperstown
- St Malachy's Ps, Coleraine
- Tir-Na-Nog Ps
- Glenravel Ps
- St John's Ps, Coleraine
- St Mary's Ps (Glenview)
- St Joseph's Ps, Antrim
- Lourdes Ps

- St Brigid's Ps, Magherafelt
- St Patrick's Ps, Glenariffe
- St Columba's Ps, Coleraine
- St Joseph's Ps, Dunloy
- St Ciaran's Ps, Cushendun
- St Nicholas' Ps, Carrickfergus
- St Colmcille's Ps, Ballymena
- St Brigid's Ps, Ballymena
- St Paul's Ps, Ahoghill
- Kilcoan Ps
- Desertmartin Ps
- Bunscoil An Chastil
- Gaelscoil Na Speirini
- Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
- Carnlough Controlled Integrated Ps
- Glengormley Integrated Ps
- Carhill Integrated Ps
- Ballycastle Integrated Ps
- Rathenraw Integrated Ps
- Roundtower Integrated Ps
- Braidside Integrated Ps
- Maine Integrated Ps

Source: school census in the north of Ireland.

Note:

3. Composite classes are those classes where children from at least two curriculum year groups are taught together. In some instances however, children from different year groups may be taught as a single year group. An example of this might be where a child from abroad is 'held back' a year, so that they can access the curriculum at a level appropriate to their previous educational experience. Some instances of these are included in the figures provided.
4. Figures relate to children in year 1 – 7 classes and exclude children in special units within schools.

Academic Selection

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Education what options will be available to children attending (i) St John's Primary School, Glen; (ii) St Mary's Primary School, Barr; (iii) St Colman's Primary School, Sheeptown; (iv) Ballyholland Primary School, Ballyholland; (v) St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge; (vi) Carrick Primary School, Burren; and (vii) Clontifleece Primary School, Warrenpoint, who, prior to transferring to second level education choose not to participate in any form of academic selection. (AQW 6120/09)

Minister of Education: Déantar cur síos ar na roghanna atá ar fáil do thuismitheoirí agus do pháistí ó scoil ar bith liostaithe thuas, nó ó bhunscoil ar bith eile, laistigh den leabhrán asitrithe atá foilsithe ar bhonn bliaintiúil ag gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus a shonraíonn na critéir iontrála a bhaineann le gach iarbhunscoil. Sonraítear ann fosta eolas ábhartha eile a chuidíonn le thuismitheoirí agus le páistí socrúithe eolasacha a dhéanamh nuair atá roghanna um aistriú iarbhunscoile le nochtadh ar fhoirm aistrithe acu.

The options that are available to parents and children associated with any of the schools listed, or any other primary school, are described within a post-primary transfer booklet which is published annually by each Education and Library Board detailing the admissions criteria that apply to all post-primary schools and other relevant information that helps parents and children make informed decisions on the expressing of preferences for post-primary transfer on a transfer form. The post-primary transfer booklets contain information about all types of school regardless of whether they practise academic selection or not.

Academic Selection

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Education what options will be available to children attending (i) St Mary's Primary School, Rathfriland; (ii) St Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh; (iii) St Patrick's Primary School, Ballymaghery; (iv) St Paul's Primary School, Cabra; (v) St Colman's Primary School, Annaclone; (vi) St Mary's Primary School, Dechomet; and (vii) St Michael's Primary School, Finnis, who, prior to transferring to second level education, choose not to participate in any form of academic selection. (AQW 6121/09)

Minister of Education: Déantar cur síos ar na roghanna atá ar fáil do thuismitheoirí agus do pháistí ó scoil ar bith liostaithe thuas, nó ó bhunscoil ar bith eile, laistigh den leabhrán asitrithe atá foilsithe ar bhonn bliaintiúil ag gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus a shonraíonn na critéir iontrála a bhaineann le gach iarbhunscoil. Sonraítear ann fosta eolas ábhartha eile a chuidíonn le thuismitheoirí agus le páistí socrúithe eolasacha a dhéanamh nuair atá roghanna um aistriú iarbhunscoile le nochtadh ar fhoirm aistrithe acu.

The options that are available to parents and children associated with any of the schools listed, or any other primary school, are described within a post-primary transfer booklet which is published annually by each Education and Library Board detailing the admissions criteria that apply to all post-primary schools and other relevant information that helps parents and children make informed decisions on the expressing of preferences for post-primary transfer on a transfer form. The post-primary transfer booklets contain information about all types of school regardless of whether they practise academic selection or not.

Academic Selection

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Education what options will be available to children attending (i) Holy Cross Primary School, Atticall; (ii) Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Grange; (iii) Killowen Primary School, Killowen; (iv) St Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor; (v) St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint; and (vi) St Ronan's Primary School, Newry; who, prior to transferring to second level education, choose not to participate in any form of academic selection. (AQW 6122/09)

Minister of Education: Déantar cur síos ar na roghanna atá ar fáil do thuismitheoirí agus do pháistí ó scoil ar bith liostaithe thuas, nó ó bhunscoil ar bith eile, laistigh den leabhrán asitrithe atá foilsithe ar bhonn bliaintiúil ag gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus a shonraíonn na critéir iontrála a bhaineann le gach iarbhunscoil. Sonraítear ann fosta eolas ábhartha eile a chuidíonn le thuismitheoirí agus le páistí socrúithe eolasacha a dhéanamh nuair atá roghanna um aistriú iarbhunscoile le nochtadh ar fhoirm aistrithe acu.

The options that are available to parents and children associated with any of the schools listed, or any other primary school, are described within a post-primary transfer booklet which is published annually by each Education and Library Board detailing the admissions criteria that apply to all post-primary schools and other relevant information that helps parents and children make informed decisions on the expressing of preferences for post-primary transfer on a transfer form. The post-primary transfer booklets contain information about all types of school regardless of whether they practise academic selection or not.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education how many complaints she has received from parents about post primary transfer arrangements in the last year (i) in total; (ii) broken down by constituency; and (iii) broken down by council area (AQW 6138/09)

Minister of Education: Tá méid suntasach chomhfhreagrais faighte agam i rith na tréimhse seo maidir le hábhar an aistrithe iarbhunscoile, agus in alán cásanna, bíonn thuismitheoirí agus eile ar lorg léiriúcháin faoi shonruithe um fhorbairt mo mholtaí ar an aistriú iarbhunscoile agus le déanaí ar fhoilsiú na Treoir um Aistriú 2010.

I have received a considerable volume of correspondence on the subject of post-primary transfer during this period, and in many instances parents and others are seeking clarification on points of details about the development of my proposals for post-primary transfer and in more recent times the publishing of Transfer 2010 guidance. Correspondence of this nature is not routinely classified by any category and may take the form of enquiries, supportive or negative comments, or personal views on a way forward. On occasions parental correspondence includes a request for me to bring certainty to bear on arrangements for Transfer 2010. It is a subjective judgement as to whether correspondence of this nature should be described as letters of complaint,

and in an increasing number of instances parental correspondence takes the form of an e-mail which contains no address details, hence precluding any analysis by constituency or council area. The information requested is therefore not readily available.

Projects Planned for North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education what are the (i) projects; and (ii) amounts of capital investment planned for the North Down constituency for (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11. (AQW 6155/09)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas an t-eolas ar mhórhionscadail caipitil atá faofa i dtoghcheantar Dhún Thuaidh:

Information on approved major capital projects in the North Down constituency is as follows:

School	Project Details	Estimated Cost £M	Estimated Start Date
Bangor Grammar School	New school on new site	17.8	2009/10
St Columbanus College, Bangor	New school on existing site	14.8	2009/10
Priory College, Holywood	New school on new site	11.7	2010/11
Towerview P.S. Bangor	New school on existing site	3.0	Complete 2009/10

A number of minor works schemes are also in planning to improve facilities at the following schools in 2009/10, subject to sufficient resources being available. These are detailed in the table below. At this stage, it is not possible to anticipate minor works projects for the 2010/11 financial year.

School	Project Details	Estimated Cost £000'S
St Patrick's Primary School Holywood	Toilet refurbishment Replacement windows	160
Sullivan Upper Holywood	Air conditioning system to selected rooms Fire Risk Assessment Refurbishment of music department	5 117 n/k
Trinity Nursery School Bangor	Rewire	60
Clandeboye Primary School Bangor	New boiler plant	120
Crawfordsburn Primary School	Toilet refurbishment Improvements to entrance way	100 55
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	2 or 3 classroom extension with shared play/ resource space	300
Millisle Primary School	Disabled Access and enlarge Special Educational Needs room	80
Rathmore Primary School Bangor	Improvements to toilet facilities	100
Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	Works to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act	100
Glenlola Collegiate School, Bangor	Extension to lunch accommodation in basement	50

Donaghadee High School

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education to explain why the South Eastern Education and Library Board has failed to contact staff at Donaghadee High School about their future, since the school is due to close in August 2009. (AQW 6186/09)

Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios dom ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Dheiscirt go bhfuil baint ghníomhach dhíreach acu leis an fhoireann múinteoireachta agus leis an fhoireann nach múinteoirí iad atá fostaithe i Donaghadee High School agus leis na ceardchumann maidir le dúnadh na scoile ar 31 Lúnasa 2009.

I am advised by the South Eastern Education and Library Board that the Board is actively involved directly with teaching and non teaching staff employed in Donaghadee High School and their Trade Unions concerning the closure of the school on 31 August 2009.

The Board also advises that a number of consultation meetings have already taken place with staff and Trade Unions. Individual one-to-one meetings with staff are being scheduled.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education if grammar schools will continue to have the same status following the introduction of the proposed transfer arrangements in 2010. (AQW 6192/09)

Minister of Education: Tugtar sainmhíniú dleathach do scoil ghramadaí ar bhonn nach bhfuil nasctha leis an phróiseas iontrála atá aici.

A grammar school is legally defined as a grammar school in a manner unconnected with the nature of its admissions process. The existing definition is contained in the interpretation section of the Education and Libraries Order (NI), 1986 and is as follows: “‘grammar school’ means a secondary school which—

- (a) immediately before the coming into operation of Article 128 of the 1989 Order was a school in which fees were charged or could have been charged in respect of pupils admitted to the school, or a school which replaces such a school or schools; or (b) is established after the coming into operation of that Article and is designated by the Department as a grammar school.

Post Primary Transfer

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education if the Free School Meals (FSME) criterion is the over-riding admissions criterion for transfer of children from primary to post-primary schools. (AQW 6194/09)

Minister of Education: Minítear san Aistriú 2010 go moltar le bheith ina chéad chritéar é an critéar um Theidlíocht do Bhéilí Saora Scoile (FSME) agus é in úsáid ag gach iarbhunscóil nuair atá a n-iontrálacha á socrú acu.

The Transfer 2010 guidance explains that a Free School Meals Entitlement (FSME) criterion is recommended as the first criterion to be used by all post-primary schools in determining admissions. The guidance also lists a number of other recommended criteria, but in no particular order.

Post-Primary Transfer: Legal Advice

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education whether she has discretion to publish the legal advice she received from the Departmental solicitor in relation to the introduction of guidelines for post-primary transfer. (AQO 2295/09)

Minister of Education: Glacann gach Roinn comhairle dlí (agus cineálacha eile comhairle riachtanaí) maidir le roinnt mórbeart.

All Departments take legal (and other necessary types of advice) on many major actions. Like all legal advice obtained by Government Departments, this advice is privileged. I do not therefore intend publishing legal advice received in relation to this issue.

However, the legislative basis for the issuing of guidance has already been published. Paragraph 1 of the guidance states that it is issued under Article 30 of the Education Order 2006. I will quote what this Article says: “The Department may issue, and from time to time revise, such guidance as it thinks appropriate in respect of the arrangements for the admission of pupils to grant-aided schools.

Educational Strategies

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education what communication she has had with her colleagues in Scotland and Wales about exchanging educational strategies. (AQO 2297/09)

Minister of Education: Bhuaile mé leis an Aire in Albain ar 12 Nollaig 2007 le plé a dhéanamh ar chúrsaí amhail oiliúint do mhúinteoirí, dul i ngleic leis an tearghnóthachtáil agus Gaelscolaíocht anseo agus in Albain.

I met with my Scottish counterpart on 12 December 2007 to discuss and share our thinking on matters such as teacher education, tackling educational underachievement and Irish/Gaelic-medium education.

I attended British Irish Council meetings on 16 July 2007 and 14 February 2008 along with counterparts from England, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey. The meeting in Dublin in February focussed on issues of drug misuse, with a focus on children and families; early years policy; child protection; and child poverty – all issues for which our education system has a role to play.

In September 2008, I attended a meeting of the British and Irish Anti-Bullying Forum, of which my Department is a member.

Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education what is the status of the Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion which commenced in April 2006. (AQO 2298/09)

Minister of Education: Cuireadh na moltaí a bhí mar thoradh ar an Athbhreithniú faoi bhráid an Choiste Fheidhmiúcháin i mí Iúil 2008 le meabhrán feidhmiúcháin breise i mí na Samhna ar lorg comhaontaithe leis na moltaí a eisiúint le haghaidh comhairliúcháin phoiblí.

The policy proposals which have emerged from the Review were referred to the Executive in July 2008 with a further Executive memo in November seeking agreement to issue for public consultation.

To date the Executive has not discussed the policy proposals and agreement has not been given to proceed to consultation.

Subject to Executive agreement it is our intention to proceed to public consultation without delay.

The policy proposals relate to the most vulnerable in our society and the public consultation on the policy proposals are much anticipated by educationalists, voluntary sector, parents, teachers, trade union side and all those involved in the extensive pre-consultation stage.

I have recently issued my Executive colleagues a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment on the review's proposals. This clearly identifies the various barriers to learning which children in our society face and many of which are not mutually exclusive.

There are now nearly 60,000 (18.6%) of our children and young people with a special educational need and 13,219 (4.1%) with a statement. The policy proposals maintain a very clear focus on the needs of these children within an inclusive conceptual framework which complements and supports the efforts to address special educational need. The concept of additional need recognises the interface between barriers to learning which already exist for many of our children and the applicability of a range of strategies to the continuum of need.

The focus of the proposed policy is on early identification and early intervention to provide the necessary support through capacity building in educational settings and multi disciplinary partnerships with the health and social services sectors.

My policy proposals aim to improve both the outcomes from education and the life chances of those children.

I would implore my Executive colleagues to urgently agree to the issue of these proposals for full consultation to allow everyone involved to contribute to the shaping of the final policy.

Post-Primary Transfer: Legal Advice

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education on what dates she received legal advice from her Departmental solicitor in relation to the introduction of guidelines for post-primary transfer. (AQO 2299/09)

Minister of Education: Glacann gach Roinn comhairle dlí (agus cineálacha eile comhairle riachtanaí) maidir le roinnt mórbheart, agus d'admhaigh mé gur ghlac mé sa chás seo.

All Departments take legal advice (and other necessary types of advice) on many major actions, and I have acknowledged that I have done so in this instance. Legal advice obtained by Government Departments is privileged, and I consider details of communication with legal advisors to be as privileged as the resulting legal advice.

The legislative basis for the issuing of guidance has already been published. Paragraph 1 of the guidance states that it is issued under Article 30 of the Education Order 2006. That Article states: "The Department may issue, and from time to time revise, such guidance as it thinks appropriate in respect of the arrangements for the admission of pupils to grant-aided schools."

Post-Primary Transfer: Independent Arrangements

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the impact on children of schools opting for independent transfer arrangements based on examination. (AQO 2300/09)

Minister of Education: Schools are required to "have regard to" the Transfer 2010 guidance. Any school that decides thereafter to depart from the recommendations contained within the guidance will help perpetuate the inequalities associated with the outgoing arrangements and risks creating dysfunction within the overall admissions process.

The impact on children whose parents choose to seek admission for them to these schools will be the stress and anxiety associated with preparing for multiple tests, possibly of differing types, and awaiting the results thereafter. They run the risk of further uncertainty and anxiety if challenges arise in respect of any aspect of the testing process.

Ní gá go dtarlóidh sé seo ar chor ar bith agus is féidir é a sheachaint má chloíonn gach scoil leis na moltaí atá sa treoir ar Aistriú 2010.

This is entirely unnecessary and can be avoided if all schools adhere to the recommendations contained in the Transfer 2010 guidance.

Science, Mathematics and English: NI Performance

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of Northern Ireland's performance in Science, Mathematics and English as reported in the Programme for International Student Assessment report published in December 2007, and how these compare with the non-selective systems in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. (AQO 2301/09)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn torthaí 2006 an Chláir um Mheasúnú ar Mhic Léinn Idirnáisiúnta (PISA) sa léitheoireacht mar shampla, go bhfuil scór de 495 againn agus is ionann an scór seo agus meánfheidhmíocht ag leibhéal OECD.

The outcomes from the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in, for example, reading show that we have a score of 495 which represents an average performance at OECD level. Compare this to the performance of the south where children are not subjected to the trauma of selection and generally attend all-ability schools - its performance in reading is significantly higher than ours and significantly higher than the OECD average.

Turning to England and Scotland, I can report that their PISA outcomes place them in a similar bracket to us. Like us and like the south, they are significantly above the OECD average performance in science. In reading and in mathematics both Scotland and England perform at the OECD average, as do we.

It is clear to me that we should be aspiring to be far better than simply average – there should be no reason why our performance cannot match that of the south in reading; or indeed of countries like Finland which outperform us in all three areas: reading, mathematics and science.

Academic selection does not improve our chances of achieving better performance – in my view, quite the reverse. An indicator of that is the fact that, of all OECD countries, we have one of the greatest gaps in achievement between our highest and lowest performing students and that is nothing to be proud of.

Post-Primary Transfer: Entry Criteria

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the legal requirements faced by schools opting to use examinations as part of their entry criteria. (AQO 2302/09)

Minister of Education: Soláthraíonn an Treoir Aistrithe 2010, a bhí foilsithe de bhun mo raitis ar 2 Feabhair 2009 chuig an Tionól, líosta léiriúcháin, nach bhfuil uileghabhálach, de na riachtanais a bheidh ag scoileanna a roghnaíonn gan glacadh leis na moltaí sa treoir.

The Transfer 2010 guidance published on foot of my 2 February 2009 statement to the Assembly provides an illustrative, though not exhaustive, list of requirements faced by schools that choose not to adhere to the recommendations contained within the guidance.

Some of these requirements have a legislative basis, such as the requirement to make reasonable adjustments for children defined as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Other requirements set out in the guidance, such as the special provisions and special circumstances procedures, do not have their origins set out explicitly in legislation, but can equally be described as requirements in that breakaway schools would be expected by parents to operate robust procedures of an equivalent standard to those in operation under the outgoing arrangements involving a Department of Education approved Transfer Test. Failure to do so may lead to legal challenges by parents.

Schools intending to offer entrance tests will in my view increasingly become embroiled in a legal minefield.

Post-Primary Transfer: Breakaway Entrance Tests

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Education if the absence of regulation means that children will sit a number of different breakaway entrance tests. (AQO 2303/09)

Minister of Education: Níl gá ar bith ann do pháiste ar bith le teist iontrála a dhéanamh.

There is no need for any child to sit an entrance test. The Transfer 2010 guidance published on foot of my 2 February 2009 statement to the Assembly provides for a system of post-primary transfer which does not require any form of testing and addresses the inequalities associated with academic selection.

Schools intending to offer entrance tests will in my view increasingly become embroiled in a legal minefield.

Post-Primary Transfer: CCEA Test

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Education to detail why she has withdrawn the test that CCEA had been developing. (AQO 2304/09)

Minister of Education: Is é an t-aon bhealach amháin gur féidir teist a chur ar fáil ar bhonn freagrach, ná creatlach reachtach a chur léi a mhíníonn cén dóigh a n-úsáidfeá í.

The only way a test could responsibly be made available is if there is a legislative framework defining its use. The successful operation of an admission-determining test requires not just a test, but a legal framework providing for which schools can and cannot use it, stating exactly how it should and should not be used and also stating that it alone should be used.

The test was a contingency for an agreement. My proposals featured a test in the interests of compromise and to give grammar schools three years to adjust to a long-term future without any selection and without any test. The reason that will not now happen is because others were not capable of equivalent concessions.

Portadown College: New School

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Education for an update on plans to build a new school at Portadown College. (AQO 2305/09)

Minister of Education: Tá an measúnú ar an bhreithmheas athcheartaithe eacnamaíochta ar Portadown College críochnaithe ag an Roinn.

The Department has completed its assessment of a revised economic appraisal for Portadown College which was submitted by the Southern Education and Library Board. The Board has agreed to undertake further work on the option to complete a replacement school on the playing fields on the lower part of the existing school site.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Disablement Advisory Service

Dr W McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assistance is available from the Disablement Advisory Service for young people with special needs leaving school who are unable to access mainstream vocational training provision. (AQW 5753/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The Disablement Advisory Service purchases residential vocational training places at Parkanaur College for people with disabilities including young people. The Disablement Advisory Service also provides a range of pre-vocational and vocational programmes to assist people with disabilities find and keep employment. These programmes include: Workable (NI), Access to Work, New Deal for Disabled People, the Job Introduction Scheme, the Condition Management Programme and the Work Preparation Programme.

Filling Employment Gaps

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department is working with local companies to fill employment gaps created by migrant workers leaving Northern Ireland to work elsewhere. (AQW 5802/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: While there is currently no statistical evidence to suggest that migrant workers are leaving Northern Ireland to work elsewhere, my Department has access to a greater pool of labour supply already skilled for jobs or willing to retrain and improve their skills level to take up vacant positions due to the economic downturn. Through Programmes such as Steps to Work, Apprenticeships NI and Bridge to Employment we will continue to work closely with employers from all Sectors to meet their particular skills needs.

Placement Programmes

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what placement programmes and other incentives are available for companies to encourage them to hire recent graduates. (AQW 5803/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department has a number of programmes available to further develop the skills and knowledge of graduates to encourage companies to recruit them.

The Software Professional Course is a 35 week graduate conversion course designed to give non-IT graduates the skills to work in the ICT industry in Northern Ireland. Participants receive a training allowance of £120 per week from the Department whilst in training and they have the opportunity to earn up to £500 in bonuses depending on performance.

The Futures Programme is another example of the Department's commitment to helping employers to recruit graduates. The Programme, supported jointly by the Department and Invest NI, is designed to develop expertise in the associated areas within the fund servicing sector. It gives full training for the Investment Administration Qualification and provides an opportunity for placement with a top financial services institution in the UK or Europe, with the view to permanent employment on completion of the course.

To date, over 30 graduates have completed training under the Futures Programme and have participated in a number of workshops aimed at developing their personal effectiveness, teamwork and interview skills, the aim of which is to ensure that the participants make an immediate impact on their future placement company.

Bridge to Employment programmes are also available to companies as a method of recruiting graduates and indeed have been used in this way previously. Bespoke training courses are developed by Bridge to Employment

staff in conjunction with the participating company and include, where possible, periods of in-company training to provide participants with on-the-job experience.

In addition, my Department is currently in early stage discussions with Invest NI on the possibility of developing a graduate placement scheme which would allow companies to offer placements to new graduates. This new concept would allow the companies, and the wider economy, to avoid seeing potential employees leave the local job market to seek work elsewhere (for example in London) at a time when both global economic conditions and recruitment freezes in multinational firms are impacting on their planned recruitment. Invest NI would provide funding for the wage costs of the placements whilst the Department for Employment and Learning would fund a series of off the job training covering technical training and softer skills such as project management and team working.

It is hoped that a pilot of this programme focusing initially on the IT sector will be operational by this summer.

Furthermore, the Employment Service provides assistance to individuals who are unemployed or economically inactive to move towards and into work. An Employer Subsidy may be available to employers recruiting individuals who have been unemployed or economically inactive for 13 weeks or more, including graduates.

Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what level of cooperation there is between companies, training organisations and jobs and benefits offices. (AQW 5804/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There is a strong level of co-operation between Jobs and Benefits Office staff, employers and training organisations through provision of on-site redundancy clinics, Job Fairs, Advice and Opportunities Forums and partnerships with employers and Steps to Work lead contractors.

Apprentices

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what schemes are available for companies and businesses to help with employing trainees and apprentices. (AQW 5806/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department is committed to helping companies employ trainees and apprentices and runs a number of initiatives to this end.

The Bridge to Employment programme is a pre-employment training programme which aims to provide customised training courses to equip the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, as well as those returning to the labour market, with the skills necessary to compete for new employment opportunities on an equal basis with others.

The programme also assists those employers wishing to expand their workforce to recruit suitable skilled unemployed people, thereby minimising the effects on other employers.

Participants on Bridge to Employment training courses learn the skills necessary to meet the recruitment profile for employment opportunities provided by inward investment companies and expanding indigenous companies. Bespoke training courses are developed by Bridge staff in conjunction with the participating company. The training courses are delivered mainly by the Further Education colleges, other public or private sector training providers or, in exceptional cases, by the employer. Where possible, periods of in-company training are included to provide participants with on-the-job experience.

Training places leading to job opportunities are advertised in the press, the Jobs & Benefits offices, including the JobcentreOnline website, and through the network of Community Groups. Participating companies are expected to offer a job interview to all trainees who successfully complete the training course. There is a target of 80% employment however, actual outcomes consistently exceed this.

ApprenticeshipsNI aims to provide participants of all ages with the opportunity to get Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications. This provision offers a diverse range of training and the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications, giving participants the necessary skills needed for their chosen career. There are currently over 100 types of apprenticeships available.

Employers contribute by providing quality training in the workplace, by supporting the apprentice's learning and by paying a wage that is relative to the industry rate for the job. The Department pays full costs of 'directed

training' for the duration of an apprenticeship. Depending on the complexity, occupational area and level of the apprenticeship framework being followed, the maximum funding can range between £2,600 and £10,800.

In addition, employer incentives are available ranging between £500 and £1,500. Once again this is relative to the type of apprenticeship being undertaken and is payable on the achievement of a full apprenticeship framework.

By offering Apprenticeships, employers will find it easier to recruit and retain the right people for their business. The Department plans to include a suitable entry on an Invest NI website (www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk) to raise the profile amongst businesses of this provision.

Local Training Needs

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what level of co-operation exists between those companies who have certain training requirements and those with responsibility for identifying local training needs and providing this training. (AQW 5807/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In Northern Ireland there are six Workforce Development Forums tasked to identify local skills training needs to propose practical solutions to their skills needs. These are employer-led structures and they invite membership from employers and other stakeholder organizations involved in local economic development.

The Workforce Development Forums are holding a series of local workshops/publicity events to ensure that employers are given every opportunity to communicate their labour force skills needs and to work with them to develop solutions at a local level.

In addition, my Department is currently developing a programme to support the work of the Forums through the provision of a team of training advisers who can further strengthen the links between the demand and supply sides of the training system. This will complement the existing employer engagement mechanisms established in each of the 6 Further Education Colleges.

Apprenticeship Schemes

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if there are any plans to bring back the old style apprenticeship schemes or Action for Community Employment (ACE) schemes. (AQW 5808/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department has currently no plans to go back to classroom-based apprenticeships. Employers are central to the success of an apprenticeship programme. An individual cannot be trained as an apprentice unless he/she is employed and the employer commits to training under an Apprenticeship Framework, as designed by industry for industry. Consequently, the employer is central to the whole programme. A good employer trains and develops his/her workforce because it makes good business sense in terms of increased productivity, staff motivation and retention and thereby improving business competitiveness.

My Department currently has no plans to re-introduce the Action for Community Employment programme. Steps to Work is the Department's main adult return to work programme and can provide participants with a wide range of work experience placements together with opportunities for subsidised employment. I am satisfied that it is sufficiently flexible to adapt to the current economic conditions and any emerging needs. It also provides greater assistance to those seeking work than that available in any other part of the UK.

Training Requirements of Companies

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans there are to ensure educational establishments provide for the training requirements of companies. (AQW 5809/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Further Education Colleges offer local companies a wide range of training provision and practical support to promote innovation, assist with product design development, and manufacture, and generally to improve companies' overall performance.

Through Workforce Development Forums (WDF), FE Colleges are better able to identify local skills training needs, and to respond accordingly.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offer a range of Foundation Degrees, integrating theoretical learning with practical application.

In order to further improve skills levels in local industry, my Department is also considering:

- strengthening WDFs, to improve further College responsiveness;
- expanding Foundation Degrees through more flexible delivery arrangements;
- introducing flexible funding arrangements to support short cycle, modular or unitary courses, and
- promoting the 'Connected' programme, which enables companies to avail of the opportunities for knowledge transfer, training and up-skilling within local universities and colleges.

Ten Day Payment Target

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much of the total amount due to suppliers was paid within the ten day payment target, in the last year. (AQW 5821/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In January the percentage of invoices paid by DEL within the ten day target was 73.5%, rising to 78.5% in February.

Following the Finance Minister's announcement in November, the Department has been committed to making payments to suppliers within the target of 10 working days. The Department complies with the Prompt Payment Code and provides information on prompt payment performance in the annual resource accounts. For the 2007/08 financial year, 99% of suppliers were paid within 30 days. Data relating to payments to suppliers within 10 days is not available for the last year.

Apprentices

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) which firms have agreed to foster apprentices; (ii) how many apprentices have been placed with fostering firms; and (iii) how many apprentices have been made redundant, broken down by vocational category. (AQW 5845/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: At present, there are no redundant apprentices in fostering. However, there are 6 applications being considered by Harland and Wolff, Magadeline and Barrington Daughter and Son. Granier Packaging and Dunbia are also considering being involved as foster employers. Other companies such as Michelin have had to withdraw their interest due to other business considerations.

Apprentices who wish to continue with their training have the opportunity to join either Training for Success or the Steps to Work programmes. Others have found alternative employment with some opting for Further Education. The Careers Service has provided advice to a number of redundant apprentices in order to explore the options available.

Management Information collected by the Department in relation to apprentices who have left training provision is included in a broader "early leaver" destination category. Consequently, the Department cannot say categorically whether these apprentices have left due to redundancy. Nevertheless, from 1st January 2008 until 21st January 2009, the following numbers of apprentices have been recorded as being "early leavers" in the following sectors:

Childcare	177
Agriculture	9
Engineering	187
Manufacturing Technologies	16
Transport Operations and Maintenance	68
Building and Construction	374
ICT Practitioners	4

ICT for Users	5
Retailing and Wholesaling	138
Service Enterprise	50
Hospitality and Catering	162
Sport Leisure Recreation	18
Publishing/Information Science	6
Administration	51
Business Management	7
Total	1,265

I would emphasise that not all of these apprentices will have left apprenticeship provision due to redundancy, as people leave both training and employment for a wide variety of reasons. This is especially true in sectors with a historically transient workforce such Hospitality and Catering or Retail.

In order to gain greater clarity on the current status of apprentices who have been made redundant from the three priority skills areas, i.e. construction, engineering, and motor vehicle, from 1st April 2008 to 4th February 2009, the Department carried out a monitoring exercise with its ApprenticeshipsNI Training Suppliers.

A total of 303 apprentices have been made redundant from these three priority skill areas since 1st April 2008. This total can be broken down as follows:

Construction	Engineering	Motor Vehicle
205	78	20

University of Ulster

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact on higher education provision in Belfast when the planned expansion of the University of Ulster takes place at the York Street campus. (AQW 5846/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In November 2008 I received an economic appraisal from the University of Ulster detailing development proposals for its Jordanstown campus, which includes the potential for capital investment in its Belfast campus.

I am advised by the University, as it intends to redistribute its existing student places between its Jordanstown and Belfast campuses and that the planned expansion does not appear to have any immediate impact on higher education provision in the Greater Belfast area.

I am also advised by the University that it is difficult for it to be explicit about the number of courses that will be created under the proposals for the Belfast campus but they will continue to respond to, and meet the needs of, the market, as appropriate.

It is imperative that the economic appraisal for the proposed capital investment in the Belfast campus meets Green Book standards. Those proposals will, if approved by my Department, be sent to the Department of Finance and Personnel for consideration. If that Department is satisfied, the matter will come back to my Department for a policy appraisal. The process is in its very early stages and my Department will be better placed to make a judgement as further details become available. Any expansion of this scale will also probably require Equality and Environmental Impact Assessments.

However, if and when approval is given, it may take up to eight years before the proposed expansion of the Belfast campus is complete.

Apprentices

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprentices have been made redundant by employers in the East Belfast constituency. (AQW 5847/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning:

The Department carried out a recent monitoring exercise, in conjunction with Training Suppliers, in respect of apprentices who have been made redundant across the three priority skills areas most affected by the economic downturn. This exercise has shown that a total of 303 apprentices have been made redundant across these areas as follows:

Construction	Engineering	Motor Vehicle
205	78	20

We are not in a position to break these figures down by constituency. However, 38 of these apprentices are from the Belfast area.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprentices have been made redundant in the North Down constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 5888/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Management Information collected by the Department in relation to apprentices who have left the apprenticeship provision is included in a broader “early leaver” destination category. Consequently, the Department cannot say categorically whether these apprentices have left due to redundancy. The following table indicates the number of apprentices that have been recorded as “early leavers” in the North Down area for the periods 20th March 2006 until 20th March 2007, 21st March 2007 until 20th March 2008 and 21st March 2008 until 11th March 2009.

We are not in a position to break these numbers down by constituency. However, we have endeavoured, in the table below, to provide you with the information broken down by the town of residence of apprentices that closely represent your constituency.

Town	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Newtownards	18	24	31	73
Bangor	17	17	26	60
Donaghadee	3	1	5	9
Hollywood	4	0	3	7
Total	42	42	65	149

I would emphasise that not all of these apprentices will have left apprenticeship provision due to redundancy, as people leave training for a wide variety of reasons.

Many of the apprentices listed above will have found alternative employment, or will have availed of the Department’s contingency arrangements for redundant apprentices for those affected in the key skills areas of Motor Vehicle, Engineering and Construction. Others may have returned to an alternative training provision or mainstream Further Education.

Third Level Education College Staff

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when arrears arising out of national pay agreements, are expected to be paid to third level education college staff. (AQW 5890/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The implementation of the National Joint Council pay increase for non-teaching staff in Further Education (FE) Colleges is subject to an approval process, in accordance with the public sector pay policy adopted by the Northern Ireland Executive.

The terms under which the pay agreement will be applied, and its associated business case, are currently being prepared by FE College employers, in consultation with my Department. That work should be completed within the next two weeks. When finalised, the proposals will be submitted to the Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) for approval. The increase will be paid once that approval process has been completed.

Non-Teaching Staff in Further Education Colleges

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to confirm when the NJC pay increase for non-teaching staff in Further Education Colleges for 2008 was agreed; and (ii) when this will be paid.

(AQW 5924/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The application of a National Joint Council (NJC) pay increase of 2.45%, to non teaching staff in Further Education (FE) Colleges was agreed in October 2008. The increase is effective from April 2008. In addition, following an arbitration award at national level in March 2009, an additional 0.3% on top of the 2.45% is expected to be paid to non teaching staff from April 2008. The implementation of the pay increase is subject to an approval process in accordance with the public sector pay policy adopted by the Executive. The terms under which the pay agreement will be applied, and its associated business case, are currently being prepared by FE College employers in consultation with my Department. That work should be completed within the next two weeks. When finalised, the proposals will be submitted to the Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) for approval. The increase will be paid once that approval process has been completed.

Reducing Stress in the Workplace

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning given that stress is the primary reason for absence from work, what action he intends to take to improve motivation and morale and reduce stress in the workplace.

(AQW 5951/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department recognises that such illnesses whether work related or not, can lead to long term absence from work. The Department actively promotes stress management through interventions including;

- referral to the welfare support service,
- 24 hour access to the employee assistance programme (Carecall),
- timely referral to the Occupational Health Service (OHS) for advice,
- staff participation in physical health and lifestyle assessments which are provided by OHS,
- information leaflets and publications on mental health issues, including stress, which are accessible on the OHS website,
- a 2 day Healthworks course which enables staff to assess their health and review their lifestyle,
- Healthworks Roadshows and short ad hoc stress sessions,
- provision of ongoing training to help employees cope with changing roles and technology,
- provision of special leave and flexible working arrangements,
- promotion of the sources of help and support available including the NICS Carers' website and the Civil Service Benevolent Fund and
- the equal opportunities officer and a network of harassment contact advisors.

The Department has arranged for the Benevolent Fund to deliver personal finance seminars to staff during March 2009.

The Department is also considering undertaking a stress survey. It is hoped that the results of the survey will help inform and influence policy direction and target 'hotspots'.

Apprentices

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprentices have been made redundant since September 2008; and their current employment status, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 5957/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Management Information collected by the Department in relation to apprentices who have left the Apprenticeship provision is included in a broader “early leaver” destination category. Consequently, the Department cannot say categorically whether these apprentices have left due to redundancy. Nevertheless, from 1st January 2008 until 21st January 2009, the following numbers of apprentices have been recorded as being “early leavers” in the following sectors:

Childcare	177
Agriculture	9
Engineering	187
Manufacturing Technologies	16
Transport Operations and Maintenance	68
Building and Construction	374
ICT Practitioners	4
ICT for Users	5
Retailing and Wholesaling	138
Service Enterprise	50
Hospitality and Catering	162
Sport Leisure Recreation	18
Publishing/Information Science	6
Administration	51
Business Management	7
Total	1,265

I would emphasise that not all of these apprentices will have left apprenticeship provision due to redundancy, as people leave both training and employment for a wide variety of reasons.

Furthermore, many of the apprentices listed above will have found alternative employment, or will have availed of the Department’s contingency arrangements for redundant apprentices for those affected in the key skills areas of Motor Vehicle, Engineering and Construction. Others may have returned to an alternative training provision or mainstream Further Education.

In order to gain greater clarity on the current status of apprentices who have been made redundant from the three priority skills areas, the Department carried out a monitoring exercise with its ApprenticeshipsNI Training Suppliers. This revealed that 303 apprentices have been made redundant from these areas from 1st April 2008 to 4th February 2009. This total can be broken down as follows:

Construction	Engineering	Motor Vehicle
205	78	20

The current status of these apprentices is as follows;

- 157 have been referred to the Careers Service for advice on further training;
- 51 are continuing their training under Training for Success;
- 26 are continuing their training under Steps to Work;
- 43 have found alternative employment, including continuing apprenticeship training or returned to their previous employer;
- 16 have entered Further Education; and

- the remaining 10 apprentices have not maintained contact with the training supplier.

The Department is not in a position to break these numbers down by constituency. However, the following table provides a breakdown by City/Town based on the address of each apprentice.

Antrim	2	Cookstown	10	Limavady	8
Armagh	8	Craigavon	2	Lisburn	4
Ballinamallard	1	Crumlin	2	Londonderry	14
Ballycastle	7	Derrylin	1	Magherafelt	15
Ballymena	19	Donemana	1	Newcastle	1
Ballymoney	10	Downpatrick	7	Newry	12
Ballynahinch	7	Dromore	1	Newtownabbey	7
Banbridge	5	Drumquin	1	Newtownards	5
Bangor	1	Dungannon	26	Newtownstewart	1
Belcoo	2	ROI	1	Omagh	19
Belfast	38	Enniskillen	2	Portadown	5
Bellaghy	1	Hillsborough	1	Portrush	2
Bushmills	1	Keady	2	Randalstown	1
Carrickfergus	8	Kesh	1	Roslea	1
Castleterragh	2	Kilkeel	1	Strabane	15
Coleraine	17	Larne	4	Trillick	1

I trust that you will find this information satisfactory.

Teacher Training at Queens University

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what the religious breakdown is of people in teacher training at Queens University. (AQW 6027/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The religious breakdown of people in teaching training courses at Queen's University, Belfast in 2007/08 is detailed in the table below.

Religion	Number
Protestant	80
Catholic	75
Other	10
Not known/available	20
Total	185

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2007/08.
- (3) Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and has a high non-response rate.

University Email Accounts

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what regulations are in place to govern the use of university email accounts by staff for party political purposes. (AQW 6058/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Both universities in Northern Ireland are independent institutions and are responsible for formulating their own regulations governing the use of their email accounts and systems. They have policies in place and they are subject to regular review. The policies do not refer specifically to the use of email accounts for party political purposes.

At Queen's University users are permitted to make use of the email system for personal reasons but this must be for occasional use only. Any regular and excessive use may give rise to review and possible disciplinary action.

At the University of Ulster staff email accounts may be used for any academic, administrative, or social and recreational use which is in furtherance of the aims and mission statement of the University. Use of email accounts which does not comply with this is not authorised.

University Students

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many, and what percentage of the total number of students went to university from each constituency in each of the last three years. (AQW 6060/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The total number of NI domiciled students enrolled at a UK Higher Education Institution from each parliamentary constituency in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below:

Parliamentary Constituency	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Belfast East	2,895	4.4	2,645	4.2	2,630	4.2
Belfast North	2,265	3.4	2,115	3.4	2,200	3.5
Belfast South	5,155	7.8	4,580	7.3	4,215	6.8
Belfast West	2,465	3.8	2,280	3.6	2,365	3.8
East Antrim	3,055	4.6	2,875	4.6	2,835	4.6
East Londonderry	3,275	5	3,235	5.1	3,175	5.1
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	3,735	5.7	3,595	5.7	3,430	5.5
Foyle	4,990	7.6	4,645	7.4	4,550	7.3
Lagan Valley	4,075	6.2	3,850	6.1	3,845	6.2
Mid Ulster	3,385	5.2	3,290	5.2	3,390	5.4
Newry And Armagh	4,150	6.3	3,820	6.1	3,735	6
North Antrim	3,685	5.6	3,625	5.7	3,460	5.6
North Down	3,450	5.2	3,330	5.3	3,065	4.9
South Antrim	3,700	5.6	3,475	5.5	3,430	5.5
South Down	4,275	6.5	4,075	6.5	3,885	6.2
Strangford	3,345	5.1	3,260	5.2	3,205	5.1
Upper Bann	3,630	5.5	3,510	5.6	3,490	5.6
West Tyrone	3,660	5.6	3,450	5.5	3,355	5.4
Not Known	550	0.8	1,370	2.2	2,030	3.3
Total	65,730	100	63,015	100	62,300	100

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes: (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore may not sum to totals.

(2) The latest available data are for 2007/08.

Jobs and Benefits Office in Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what staff vacancies there are in his Limavady office. (AQW 6237/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There are 3 staff vacancies in Limavady Jobs and Benefits Office.

Stranmillis/Queen's: Proposed Merger

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he will advise Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast about the likelihood of the proposed merger date of August 2009 being achieved. (AQO 2306/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am aware that both Queen's University and Stranmillis University College have a target date of August 2009 to complete the proposed merger between the two institutions. I have made it clear to senior management at both Queen's and Stranmillis that there are key steps that must be taken prior to any merger being approved. Those steps include the endorsement of legislation by this Assembly. The timetable for any proposed merger will be determined by the completion of all those steps, rather than any desired deadline.

Apprentices

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on his plans to assist apprentices being paid off due to the current economic difficulties. (AQO 2313/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As previously outlined, the Department introduced contingency arrangements to allow apprentices who were made redundant from the construction, engineering, and motor vehicle sectors to continue with training because these sectors were the most affected by the economic downturn.

The Department is also examining data on other sectors, and as I said recently, it will introduce similar arrangements if that is shown to be necessary.

On a recent monitoring exercise, the Department established that from the range of options available to redundant apprentices a number of these have been taken up. This includes alternative employment, Steps to Work and the Pre-apprenticeship programme. We have also determined that whilst some employers are currently considering fostering applications, most of those being re-employed have attained alternative employment and others have offered work placements through the Steps to Work option.

Research Assessment Exercise: Queen's University's Performance

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assessment his Department has made of the performance of Queen's University, Belfast in the Research Assessment Exercise. (AQO 2315/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am very pleased with the performance of both our universities in the recent UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise. Queen's University Belfast (QUB) submitted almost 800 staff to the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 and every area had research assessed as world-leading. Queen's has 11 subject areas ranked within the top 10 in the UK and 24 in the top 20. An examination of the league tables produced by the Times Higher Education on 18 December 2008 records Queen's as 39th out of the 132 universities; this represents a jump of 6 places from 2001 when it was ranked 45th.

Student Loans

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on work undertaken to increase the threshold for repayment of student loans from £15,000 to £18,000. (AQO 2316/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, which collects payments on income contingent repayment loans on Government's behalf, has made it clear to all Devolved Administrations that it cannot operate a UK-wide collection system with different repayment thresholds. My Department could

not, therefore, increase the repayment threshold unless the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills in England and the other Devolved Administrations were to do similar.

However, in light of the concerns which have been raised by the Committee for Employment and Learning, local Assembly Members and the National Union of Students and the Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI), I have recently written to my Ministerial colleagues in England, Scotland and Wales about this issue, and I have given a commitment to update the Committee when I receive their responses.

Tuition Fees

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he would request the Student Loans Company to change the system for paying university fees to include an option for students to pay by monthly direct debit. (AQO 2317/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Since the introduction of variable deferred tuition fees in September 2006, eligible students have three options for paying their tuition fees. They can:

- (i) Defer payment of their fees by applying for a tuition fee loan up to a maximum of £3,145 (in the current academic year). The tuition fee loan only has to be repaid once the student leaves their course and is earning over £15,000. The amount repaid is 9% of the borrower's gross income above that threshold; or
- (ii) Pay the full tuition fee upfront direct to the Higher Education Institution (HEI); or
- (iii) Take out a fee loan for part of the tuition fees, and pay the rest direct to the HEI.

If a student chooses to pay all or part of the tuition fees upfront, the student pays the fees directly to the HEI. The Student Loans Company has no involvement in this transaction.

In addition to the option of paying the full tuition fees up front, the Department is aware that Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster both offer students the option of paying their fees through a direct debit scheme.

As the option is already available through the University, I will not be requesting the Student Loans Company to change the system for paying university fees to include an option for students to pay by monthly direct debit.

Stranmillis University College Board of Governors

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the reasons for Protestant clergy no longer being allowed, as of right, to sit on the Board of Governors of Stranmillis College. (AQO 2318/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In 2005 legal advice ruled that it would have been unlawful for the Department to permit Protestant clergy to sit, as of right, on the Board of Governors of Stranmillis College.

Stranmillis College was incorporated under The Colleges of Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 which is subordinate to the Northern Ireland Acts of 1998 and 2000. Section 6 of the 1998 Act, when read with the 2000 Act, provides that an Order in Council cannot contain a provision which discriminates against a class of persons on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion. To allow Protestant clergy to sit, as of right, on the Board of Governors would have discriminated against other religious groupings and would have been unlawful.

Further Education Pay

Ms A Lo asked the Minister for Employment and Learning who took the decision, and when it was taken, that further education pay was covered by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay Restraint rather than the Public Sector Pay Restraint. (AQO 2320/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The application of pay policy is a devolved matter for the Northern Ireland Executive. In May 2007, the Executive adopted Civil Service Pay Guidance, which includes specific pay thresholds, for application to the wider public sector. In line with other public sector groups, the guidance was deemed to apply to Further Education lecturers in Northern Ireland.

STEM Subjects

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how he intends to encourage more students to take up STEM subjects as part of his plans to improve the skills base of the workforce. (AQO 2321/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am currently waiting on the publication of the STEM Review. Once received, my Department will make a prompt response to the report recommendations and any resource implications it may contain. In addition to this, my Department is currently in the process of commissioning research into the possibility of providing bursaries or scholarships for STEM students.

Queen's University: Land Development

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he has held discussions with Queen's University, Belfast on any proposal it may have to permit a private property business to develop its land.

(AQO 2322/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I have received assurances that Queen's University, Belfast does not have any proposal to permit a private property business to develop its land.

Higher Education Land and Accommodation Strategy

Mr A Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he is preparing a protocol with institutions of higher education, governing acquisition or disposal of land, to ensure that his Department is properly involved in any higher education land and accommodation strategy. (AQO 2323/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am not preparing a protocol with the institutions of higher education governing acquisition or disposal of land to ensure that my Department is properly involved in any higher education land and accommodation strategy.

These matters are covered under the terms of the Financial Memorandum with my Department. The universities and university colleges are required to keep their holdings of land and buildings under review, with the objective of rationalising and disposing of those which they consider, in light of their estate strategy, to be no longer needed. The Financial Memorandum places conditions on the sale of any property with an exchequer interest. These include the need to notify, or consult with, my Department in advance of such a sale and the possibility of money being recouped from the proceeds where they are not being reinvested.

Belfast Metropolitan College: Relocation

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the progress of Belfast Metropolitan College relocating to the Titanic Quarter. (AQO 2324/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Negotiations to achieve financial closure on this project have been intense and despite the extreme market conditions and without pre-empting the commercial issues I would anticipate contract signing within the next month. Construction can begin immediately upon signing and service commencement would be in scheduled for July 2011.

Redundancies: South Down

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department is taking to address recent redundancies in South Down. (AQO 2325/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department provides information and advice to those made redundant in South Down to help them find alternative employment or identify opportunities to retrain under the Department's employment and training programmes. In a number of cases the Jobs & Benefits staff were able to deliver on-site clinics directly to those who had received notices of redundancy. All redundant workers who call to the Jobs & Benefits office are given the full range of employment services.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**Ten Day Payment Target**

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much of the total amount due to suppliers was paid within the ten day payment target, in the last year. (AQW 5823/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The Department complies with the Prompt Payment Code and its annual resource accounts provide information on prompt payment. However, in the last year the amount paid to suppliers within 10 days is not available. Following Minister Dodds announcement on 28 November 2008, information on the time taken to process payments against the 10 working day target is now being produced.

Project Kelvin

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to the Project Kelvin Invitation to Tender document, when (i) MPD International was appointed project consultants; and (ii) the tender for consultancy services was advertised in the European Journal. (AQW 5871/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Following a full procurement process, managed by the Central Procurement Directorate (DFP), MPD International was appointed on the 18th February 2008.

The tender for technical consultants for Project Kelvin was advertised in the EU journal on the 12 December 2007.

Project Kelvin

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the Project Kelvin Invitation to Tender document, if her Department was informed that MPD International's Managing Director was a former senior employee of Hibernia Atlantic and if so, was it before it was awarded the contract for consultancy services. (AQW 5872/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: MPD International made it clear in the January 2008 tender submitted for the consultancy contract that its Managing Director (MD) had previously worked for a range of telecommunications and other companies, including Hibernia Atlantic prior to the setting up of MPD International in 2006.

As part of their submission, MPD provided a signed warrant stating that there would be no conflict or perceived conflict of interest in relation to the personnel or type of work involved in this contract. Central Procurement Directorate (DFP), who managed the tender process, was satisfied that there was no conflict of interest. The contract was awarded to MPD International in February 2008.

Project Kelvin

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to the Project Kelvin Invitation to Tender document, how long was MPD International in existence before it was awarded the contract by her Department. (AQW 5873/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: According to the information provided by the company, MPD International was formed in 2006.

MPD International was appointed by the Department as technical consultants for Project Kelvin in February 2008.

Project Kelvin

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if Hibernia Atlantic completed Principal Schedule 4 of the Project Kelvin Invitation to Tender document in its tender submission; and (ii) if her

Department was aware of any potential conflict of interest prior to awarding either the contract for consultancy services or the actual contract for the Submarine Cable Works. (AQW 5874/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The tender process for this project was managed by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), DFP. CPD has indicated that Hibernia Atlantic completed and submitted Principal Schedule 4.

Hibernia Atlantic indicated 2 possible conflicts of interest (i) the Managing Director of MPD International had been the CEO of Hibernia Atlantic until the end of 2004; (ii) that Arthur Cox act as the legal representation for Hibernia Atlantic in the Republic of Ireland but that it would not use Arthur Cox for this contract, therefore there would be no conflict. CPD considered both matters and concluded there was no conflict of interest.

Project Kelvin

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if the Managing Director of MPD International played any part in the Project Kelvin tender and if he attended any meetings with any of the tenderers. (AQW 5875/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Prior to the issue of the Invitation to Tender (ITT), the Managing Director (MD) of MPD International accompanied representatives of the Departments and Central Procurement Directorate (DFP) to a number of meetings with companies who operate international telecommunications networks. The purpose of these meetings was to assess the level of interest the companies might have in the project.

The MD was not directly involved in the subsequent development of the ITT and he did not attend any meetings after the issue of the ITT, either with the Department or with the tenderers.

Mourne National Park

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on (i) the progress to promote the Mourne National Park as one of the five signature projects; and (ii) her Department's timetable for achieving a 40% increase in tourism in the area by 2015. (AQW 5881/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The designation of the Mournes as a National Park is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment. NITB was a member of the Mourne National Park Working Party and has influenced this debate over the last 5 years. Should the area achieve designation it has been identified that tourism in the wider area has the potential to generate a growth of £221 million and account for 4,700 jobs by 2020.

The Mourne Signature Project (MSP) was identified on the basis that the Mournes could be Northern Ireland's first National Park. However, NITB is progressing with the MSP regardless of designation as the area has still to realise its full tourism potential. NITB has recently received several applications for financial assistance under its Tourism Development Scheme. These are currently being assessed.

The Programme for Government has set targets to increase out-of-state visitors by 25% to 2.5million and spend by 40% to £520million by 2011. The Signature Projects, including the Mourne Signature Project, are key to achieving international stand out for Northern Ireland and helping achieve these ambitious targets.

Foreign Direct Investment Jobs

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many foreign direct investment jobs have been announced since the agreement of the Programme for Government. (AQW 5887/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: From 1 April 2008 to date, 1,786 jobs have been announced as the result of investment in Northern Ireland by externally-owned businesses.

These businesses have been offered £12million of assistance by Invest NI, which contributes towards a total planned investment of £71.5million.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which functions will transfer from her Department to local government under the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 5943/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: DETI will transfer, from Invest NI and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, a number of local economic development and tourism activities to the new local councils.

- In relation to local economic development the following activities will transfer;
- Small Business Support Programme, replacement for Start a Business Programme
- Youth Entrepreneurship
- Social Entrepreneurship Programme

The new Small Business Support Programme incorporates Investing in Women and Neighbourhood Renewal activities which were previously delivered separately.

- The following local tourism activities will transfer;
- Local Product Development & Marketing
- Visitor Servicing
- Business Support
- Support for small scale tourist accommodation

My officials are working with their local government counterparts, within the implementation structures established by the DOE, to consider the practical arrangements for integrating these functions within local government.

Natural Gas Network

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has for extending the natural gas network. (AQW 5947/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: DETI is presently developing a new Strategic Energy Framework for Northern Ireland. The overall emphasis for the Framework will be a shift towards a cleaner and more efficient energy mix, including greater use of renewable energy sources, and extending the benefits of natural gas as a low carbon fuel where this is appropriate.

In furtherance of this objective, the Department is considering the economics of taking natural gas to towns in the West and North-West of Northern Ireland and will shortly be commissioning a study to determine the technical and economic feasibility of bringing gas to towns such as Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Strabane, Omagh, and Enniskillen.

In parallel, the Department is also considering the merits of a proposal to take natural gas to towns in the Downpatrick economic corridor in East Down.

Local Manufacturing Industry

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for his assessment of the state of the local manufacturing industry. (AQW 5956/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The latest official statistics indicate that manufacturing output remained constant in the third quarter of 2008, and it has increased by 3.5% since the third quarter of 2007. This compares favorably with the contraction of 2.3% in manufacturing output over the last year in the UK as a whole. However, official statistics are now beginning to reveal falling employment and significant redundancies in manufacturing. The sector accounted for 77% (2,220) of total redundancies over the year to the end of January 2009.

Furthermore, local businesses, including those in the manufacturing sector, are facing increasing challenges as a result of the deterioration in global economic conditions. The slowdown in key export markets such as GB, Europe and the US is likely to result in a fall in demand for locally produced manufacturing goods.

However, it should be noted that the recent decline in the value of sterling against both the euro and the dollar should help improve the competitiveness of our exports. Invest NI will continue to work with local firms to help them take advantage of trade opportunities in the Eurozone and elsewhere.

Invest NI

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for the total amount that Invest NI has spent in seeking to attract investment into the Upper Bann constituency. (AQW 5980/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In answering the question, I have assumed that you are referring to the marketing and sales budget allocated to attracting inward investment, both first time and follow-on.

Invest NI's international marketing and sales budget is entirely devoted to attracting investment into Northern Ireland as a single entity. As such, it is not sub-divided into regional allocations as to do so would be ineffective, inefficient and ultimately confusing to the client. To put this into some perspective, Northern Ireland is a small country that is smaller in size than a large number of County Councils in Great Britain.

When an investor has agreed to locate in Northern Ireland as a result of Invest NI's promotional efforts, which will normally include an offer of financial assistance, it will choose a location that offers the best business sense. Invest NI has limited ability to influence this decision, although it does attempt to showcase a variety of locations across Northern Ireland that broadly fit the basic project parameters presented.

Broadband Provision

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her plans to ensure parity in broadband provision for rural dwellers who presently only receive basic broadband packages. (AQW 6026/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Under the Programme for Government a number of activities specifically support the strategic priority of "Growing A Dynamic, Innovative Economy" and contribute to PSA 1 "Productivity Growth". In relation to broadband these include undertaking a range of broadband stimulation activities to encourage the take-up and innovative use of telecommunications by businesses and to develop Northern Ireland's next generation network for businesses.

In August 2008 I announced that £1.9million of EU and Government money had been set aside under the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund to offer financial support to businesses undertaking technology trials, which offer opportunities for the future commercial rollout of high speed broadband services. The fund had a particular focus on the delivery of broadband services into rural areas. Two calls have taken place already which has resulted in two projects that will bring high speed services to many rural areas of Northern Ireland. I intend to open a third call in April 2009.

In January 2009 I announced that the Department had signed a three year contract with Avanti Communications to continue to provide broadband services to customers in Northern Ireland that cannot currently access broadband services via a fixed-line solution. In addition to the basic broadband service the company can deliver higher speeds should customers wish to purchase them.

I also intend to begin a procurement process, subject to the necessary approvals being agreed, seeking to appoint suitably qualified suppliers to begin building suitable infrastructure that will enable 85% of businesses in Northern Ireland, many of whom are in rural areas, access to next generation broadband services.

The issue of broadband is also one of the areas being studied under Lord Carter's Digital Britain Action Plan. The plan is to secure the UK's place at the forefront of innovation, investment and quality in the digital and communications industries. My department will be contributing to the development of this plan as appropriate.

The EU has also indicated that it is earmarking funding to help rural areas get online, bring new jobs and help businesses grow. We understand that the funding stream would be through DARD and DETI officials have met DARD to inform them of our work in this area to ensure the funds compliment existing programmes.

Coal Providers

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she has had discussions with coal providers about price reductions in relation to the recent decrease in the price of oil and gas. (AQW 6048/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I have had no discussions with coal providers about price reductions in relation to the recent decreases in the price of oil and gas. Unlike natural gas and electricity, the coal industry in Northern Ireland is unregulated and the Department has no role in coal pricing which is entirely the responsibility of coal importers, wholesalers and retailers.

Distribution of Department Publications

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will ensure that MLAs have the choice of receiving reports and consultation documents in either electronic or hard copy form. (AQW 6082/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In accordance with the OFMDFM guidance on Distribution of Departmental Publications and Consultation Documents, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment routinely makes publications available in hard copy format to a range of identified recipients and more generally in electronic format through its website. In addition publications are provided in hard copy format to others on request.

Tourism Ireland

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the expenditure figure for Tourism Ireland was broken down between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09. (AQW 6162/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: My Department funds Tourism Ireland on a financial year basis. The expenditure figure for 2007/08 is £14.538m. The figure for 2008/09 is not yet available.

The Republic of Ireland Department of Art, Sport and Tourism funds Tourism Ireland on a calendar year basis and in Euros. The expenditure figure for 2007 is €51.255m. The figure for 2008 is €53.639m. The figure for 2009 is not yet available.

HR Connect

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide an estimate of how many hours have been lost by individuals and their managers trying to resolve a query with HR Connect. (AQW 6201/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The information requested is not routinely collected and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Local Enterprise Agencies

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) how many Local Enterprise Agencies she has visited, since taking up office (ii) the names of those visited; and (iii) the dates of the visits. (AQW 6229/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Since taking up office as Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on 10 June 2008 I have visited the following Local Enterprise Agencies:-

1. Enniskillen Business Centre 30 June 2008
2. Omagh Enterprise Company 23 July 2008
3. East Belfast Enterprise Ltd 19 September 2008

I have also met with representatives from Townsend Enterprise Park in Parliament Buildings on 2 December 2008.

I am due to attend Enterprise Northern Ireland's AGM on 30 April 2009 to be held in one of the Local Enterprise Agencies.

Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she would accept an invitation to visit (i) Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency; and (ii) Armagh Business Centre. (AQW 6230/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I have recently accepted an invitation from Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency, subject to diary commitments, and would be happy to consider an invitation from Armagh Business Centre at some stage in the future.

Departmental Accounts

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to outline the process by which her Department's accounts are audited; (ii) who audits her Department's accounts; and (iii) to detail her Department's final audited accounts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6261/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Comptroller and Auditor General of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) is the Department's appointed independent external auditor under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (NI) 2001. The accounts are audited in line with the NIAO's audit plan each year.

The accounts are published each year and are available from the Assembly Library and The Stationery Office. The Department has received an unqualified audit opinion in each of the last three years.

Economic Downturn: Assistance for SMEs

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance is being offered to small and medium sized enterprises facing difficulties in the global economic downturn. (AQO 2329/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI is implementing a number of new initiatives designed to offer financial support and practical advice to its SME clients during the economic downturn.

Since September 2008, it has held 10 seminars on the theme of "Navigating through challenging times". These have attracted almost 700 attendees and feedback has been extremely positive. A further event will be held in Omagh at the end of this month.

Up to 5 days diagnostic consultancy support, provided free of charge, is available on a range of key business issues, including working capital and cash flow management. Where suitable projects are then identified, clients can then obtain up to 50% financial support towards eligible project costs from Invest NI's new £5 million Accelerated Support Fund.

Invest NI's support is not restricted to its clients. Working in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland, the District Councils and the NI Chamber of Commerce, it developed a programme to provide the wider local business community with practical advice and guidance. There have been 10 events organised to date across Northern Ireland, all of which have been well attended. I understand that the feedback from these has also been consistently positive.

Going forward, we will continue to work with companies and, where possible, assist them to mitigate the impact of the downturn, and to enable them to prepare for a future upturn.

Upper Bann: DETI Assistance for Businesses

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she is taking to assist businesses in Upper Bann. (AQO 2335/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest Northern Ireland continues to provide assistance to its clients in Upper Bann through a range of programmes designed to encourage improved international competitiveness.

In the current financial year, Invest NI has approved 113 offers of support to its client companies in the Upper Bann parliamentary constituency. These relate to £8.4 million of financial commitments contributing towards gross investment of £25.6 million.

Invest NI has also invested over £1 million in infrastructure works at three of its industrial estates at Charlestown Road Business Park in Portadown, Halfpenny Valley Industrial Estate in Lurgan and Mandeville Business Park in Craigavon. These development works will ensure that serviced sites are available for future investment projects.

Working in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland, the District Councils and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI has also offered the wider local business community the opportunity to avail of practical advice and guidance to assist them navigate through the current economic downturn. 10 information seminars have been held to date, including one in Banbridge. Over 50 businesses came to the Banbridge event, which I also personally attended. I understand that the feedback from this, like all the others, has been positive and most encouraging.

Manufacturing Companies: Assistance with Cashflow Difficulties

Mr S Neeson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance is being offered to manufacturing companies which have cashflow difficulties. (AQO 2336/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI has, for some months now, been implementing a number of initiatives designed to assist its clients mitigate the impact of a sustained economic downturn. The provision of professional advice relating to the management of working capital and cash flow has been a priority.

Invest NI has held 10 seminars on the theme of “Navigating through challenging times”. These have attracted almost 700 attendees. Participation at these events can result in up to 5 days specialist consultancy support, provided free of charge, in a variety of business-related areas, including cash flow management. Where suitable projects are identified, clients can then obtain 50% support from Invest NI’s new £5 million Accelerated Support Fund.

Working in partnership with Enterprise NI, the District Councils and the NI Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI has also developed a programme that offers the wider local business community an opportunity to avail of specific advice and guidance regarding the current economic climate.

In January this year, Lord Mandelson announced a number of UK-wide business initiatives designed to encourage the provision of credit, including the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme. This scheme guarantees up to 75% of loans to businesses and the loans can be used for investment or working capital. The scheme is operated in Northern Ireland by the Bank of Ireland and the Northern and Ulster Banks. Invest NI is encouraging its clients to discuss opportunities under this scheme with their banks.

Northern Ireland has also been included in a new grant measure under the European Commission’s temporary state aid framework. This UK-wide measure aims to support companies whose financial position has been adversely affected by the credit squeeze by providing them with up to £500k of support. Invest NI is currently working with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and other UK regions to establish how any scheme might be deployed in Northern Ireland. It is hoped that an announcement regarding a new scheme can be made in April.

Debt Relief Scheme

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the current economic difficulties, what consideration she has given to fast-tracking her Department’s proposed debt relief scheme. (AQO 2337/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: While I am keen that the legislation is put in place as soon as possible, I am also aware that the Assembly’s Enterprise Trade & Investment Committee is concerned about the possible impact on small businesses. I will, therefore, want to give full consideration to the outcome of the current consultation process before considering whether there is a case for fast-tracking, the effect of which would be to limit the opportunity for Members to debate the detail of the scheme.

Mobile Phone Charges: Border Areas

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail her Department's efforts to overcome the problems of roaming mobile phone charges in border areas. (AQO 2338/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Mobile roaming is a world-wide issue which affects those making and receiving mobile phone calls in border areas.

Between 2004 and 2007, my Department worked with the UK telecommunications regulator, the Irish telecommunications regulator and officials in the Republic of Ireland on mobile phone roaming in border areas. Significant progress was made in addressing the issue, including the introduction of all-island tariffs and special tariff initiatives for phone users by various mobile phone companies north and south. These measures significantly reduced the scale of the problem.

Efforts were also made by the industry and the regulators to publicise these tariffs through websites and adverts. Some operators also developed systems whereby a text message is sent to the user to make them aware that their mobile handset has roamed onto another operator's network.

Then, in August 2007, the European Union capped roaming tariffs across all of Europe. This led to significant tariff reductions for all mobile phone users. Later this year, the EU is planning to introduce further tariff reductions on the cost of voice calls across Europe. The EU is also planning to cap the cost of sending text messages while travelling in another EU country.

My Department is continuing to monitor the situation and liaise with the regulator.

Public Procurement: Applications from SMEs

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to making public procurement procedures less complicated in order to encourage applications from small and medium sized enterprises. (AQO 2339/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Public sector procurement procedures are highly regulated in the European Union through Directives. The current procurement directives were transposed into UK National law on 31st January 2006 as The Public Contracts Regulations (2006) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations (2006). These regulations apply to contracts above a published threshold. The Public Contracts Regulations (2006) apply to service contracts above the threshold of £90,319 in DETI and above the threshold of £139,893 for our NDPBs. The Utilities Contracts Regulations (2006) apply to utilities contracts above the threshold of £279,785.

All Public Sector contracts, irrespective of value, are covered by the EC Treaty principles which include the free movement of goods and services, non-discrimination and transparency.

In order to increase accessibility to public tenders and to streamline and standardise processes, the Procurement Board, chaired by the Minister for Finance and Personnel, endorsed a recommendation that Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) implement an electronic sourcing system as the single portal for all government procurement activities within Northern Ireland.

This 'e-Sourcing NI' system is now fully operational within CPD and plans are underway to implement the system across all CoPEs. It will assist in the simplification and standardisation of procedures and reduce both the time and costs of the registration and bidding processes. The single portal will maximise the visibility of business opportunities and make it easier for companies, particularly SMEs to bid for potential work.

In addition Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) provides support to both SMEs and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) to raise awareness and a better understanding of public procurement procedures. This includes a number of actions:

- (i) Regular engagement with representative and lead bodies from both the SME and SEE sectors and the Construction Industry, including supporting 'meet the buyer' events and supplier education programmes.
- (ii) In addition to this, individual suppliers can request information and clarification on specific tenders from CPD and are routinely offered debriefs on the quality of their tenders in order to assist them to compete more effectively for future opportunities.
- (iii) Agreement with the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) that all new public sector contracts from December 2008, will require main contractors to publish opportunities within their supply

chain, and encourage SMEs to join together as consortia to bid for larger contracts or to look for opportunities within the supply chains that will be formed by the successful tenderer.

CPD has also published guidance for SMEs and SEEs seeking to do business with the public sector. A companion guide for public sector purchasers on steps to help remove barriers faced by these suppliers has also been published. This guidance is available on CPD's website.

The recently established Construction Industry Forum – Procurement Task Group will consider how to further maximise the opportunities for SMEs to bid for, or benefit from, public sector construction contracts.

Invest NI: Land Sales

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the area of Invest NI land that was sold to new clients and to existing clients during the last three years. (AQO 2340/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In the three years from April 2006 to March 2009, Invest NI sold 208 acres of land to its client companies.

60 clients made first time purchases totalling 182 acres, while 14 clients purchased 26 acres of additional land for expansion projects.

The provision of high-quality serviced sites for industrial development at strategic locations across Northern Ireland is a key goal of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. Invest NI has a target to acquire and/or develop an additional 200 acres of land by 2012.

Serviced sites are provided to client companies with an identifiable and viable development project in locations where there is clear evidence of market failure.

Foreign Direct Investment

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the current level of foreign direct investment compares to the levels anticipated following publication of the Programme for Government. (AQO 2341/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The provisional data for those projects approved in the year to date suggests that Invest NI's 2008/09 Operating Plan inward investment targets will be achieved. These comprise targets for jobs promoted, quality of jobs, and wages and salaries secured.

A number of approved projects have not yet been announced and may well now be delayed until more favourable economic conditions arise. Nonetheless, significant investments have been announced from companies such as Bombardier, Firstsource, Fujitsu and BTI Systems.

Looking longer term into 2009/10 and 2010/11, the pipeline for new projects is not favourable. It shows a significant reduction in project numbers compared to the same point in 2007/08.

As you will understand, the economic situation is still too volatile to predict with any precision. However, the project cycle for inward investment can take 18 to 24 months to complete and Invest NI is confident that, in the medium to longer term, Northern Ireland will benefit from the opportunity that the USNI conference afforded to Northern Ireland.

I remain cautiously optimistic that new opportunities may emerge and, when they do, Northern Ireland businesses will be well placed to exploit the opportunities that arise.

Titanic Signature Project

Mr L Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Titanic Project. (AQO 2342/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Executive agreed to offer up to £43.5 million towards Titanic Quarter Limited's proposal for a Titanic Signature Project, with the balance of funding being provided by Titanic Quarter Limited, Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Belfast City Council.

The Executive's funding is subject to the satisfactory completion of commercial discussions and funding conditions with Titanic Quarter Limited, and the conclusion of a legal agreement between all funders.

All parties are working intensively on the commercial, funding and legal issues.

Redundancies: Past 12 Months

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many redundancies there have been in the last twelve months. (AQO 2343/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: There were 3,536 proposed redundancies and 2,882 confirmed redundancies in Northern Ireland in the twelve month period from 1st February 2008 to 31st January 2009.

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees.

Invest NI Assistance: Eligibility Criteria

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she would consider redefining the criteria for local businesses to be eligible for Invest NI assistance to increase the number of companies that qualify. (AQO 2344/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI's clients are manufacturing and tradable service businesses that demonstrate the greatest export potential and the prospect of improving productivity by becoming more internationally competitive. To qualify as a client, businesses need to demonstrate that currently, or over the following three years, they will;

- have total sales of over £100,000 per annum;
- have sales outside of NI greater than 25 per cent of turnover, or greater than £250,000 per annum; and,
- be capable of and willing to work with Invest NI.

For locally-owned businesses in the tradable services sector, the additional qualifying criteria are;

- that they have the potential to sustain salaries above the Northern Ireland Private Sector median; and / or,
- a minimum gross profit margin of 20 per cent shown to be achievable.

The economic and policy justification for intervening with companies that are focused only on supplying the local Northern Ireland market is not strong. Such intervention could lead to market distortion and, as a result, job displacement. Both are contrary to EU intervention rules, would be of questionable economic benefit to the local or national economy, and would not deliver good value for money from Invest NI's finite resources.

Any business in Northern Ireland can avail of advice provided through Invest NI's 'NI Business Information' web site. In addition, non-clients can also participate on Invest NI trade missions provided they are interested in becoming an exporter and they are either a manufacturer or an international service provider.

The eligibility criteria for qualification as an Invest NI client are not onerous. In addition, Invest NI must apply its policy levers and limited resources to as far as possible maximise the economic impact. As such, there are no plans to revisit the current definition.

Pharmaceutical Industries: Investment Potential

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which geographical areas are designated by Invest NI as having potential for investment in pharmaceutical industries; and what capabilities are being developed in those areas. (AQO 2345/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: There are no geographical areas within Northern Ireland that have been specifically designated by Invest NI for investment in pharmaceutical industries. Pharmaceutical companies, like any business, will chose to locate where they believe opportunities are maximised and the investment risk is minimised. Location-decisions take account of access to labour and skills, infrastructure and property, transportation linkages, linkages to academia, and the availability of financial assistance.

Invest NI has limited scope for directing investment to specific geographical areas.

Northern Ireland is a relatively small place and the opportunities and benefits that arise from investment decisions are not constrained by boundaries such as those of District Council or Parliamentary Constituency Areas. These are not self-contained labour markets and companies draw their workforces from beyond such boundaries.

Two of Northern Ireland's most successful pharmaceutical companies, Almac and Randox, for example, draw staff from wide catchment areas that extend well beyond their respective locations in Craigavon and Antrim.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Planning Policy Statement 5

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the development of Planning Policy Statement 5, and when he plans to introduce the revised statement. (AQW 5938/09)

Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): Work is ongoing on PPS 5. However it is difficult at present to provide a definitive date for publication of the PPS pending the outcome of a judicial challenge which was heard in the High Court in January 2009.

Disposal of Unlicensed Motor Vehicles

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment what was the total cost of the removal and disposal of unlicensed motor vehicles in each constituency, in the last three years. (AQW 6012/09)

Minister of the Environment: Vehicle licensing is an Excepted Matter, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport but it is administered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) under an agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport (DfT).

There is a UK-wide contract for a wide-range of activities relating to the detection, immobilisation and removal of unlicensed vehicles, which is awarded and administered by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea. I am informed that this contract does not feature a specific cost for the removal and disposal of these vehicles. The information requested is therefore not available.

Disposal of Unlicensed Motor Vehicles

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment how much was reclaimed by the Department for the removal and disposal of unlicensed motor vehicles in each constituency, in the last three years. (AQW 6033/09)

Minister of the Environment: Vehicle Licensing is an Excepted Matter, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport but it is administered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) under an agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport (DfT).

The arrangement for the removal and disposal of unlicensed motor vehicles is contained within the UK-Wide contract which was awarded and is administered by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) Swansea.

Fisheries Management

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he could confirm whether Fisheries Management is included in the Northern Ireland Marine Bill. (AQW 6057/09)

Minister of the Environment: Responsibility for fisheries rests with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. However, in the context of policy development for the Northern Ireland Marine Bill, I will be considering with Ministerial colleagues how all activities in the marine area might be managed in a more holistic and integrated way.

Footpath Provision

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment what criteria is applied by Planning Service for footpath provision in proposed residential developments for which planning approval is sought. (AQW 6068/09)

Minister of the Environment: Planning Policy for the assessment of residential development is set out in Planning Policy Statement 7, Quality Residential Environments. Policy QD1 of PPS7 states that all residential proposals should have greater regard for sustainable movement patterns and should seek to reduce reliance on the private car. Consideration of matters such as pedestrian movements must be built into the design of a proposed development from the outset. In addition, supplementary planning guidance on the provision, positioning and detailed design of footpaths in residential developments is set out in Creating Places, Achieving Quality in Residential Developments.

In the determination of planning applications, my Department will consult with DRD Roads Service which provides specialist information and transportation advice on roads related matters associated with residential development.

The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 and the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 provide the statutory basis for the adoption of roads, including footpaths, constructed by developers for future maintenance by the Roads Service.

Following consideration and agreement from Planning Service and Roads Service on the form and layout of the proposal, developers should indicate on the plans submitted for approval those areas including footpaths that are to be adopted for future maintenance by the Roads Service.

Footpaths in Housing Developments

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment how many enforcement actions have been taken for failure to complete footpaths in housing developments, in each of the past 3 years, in each parliamentary constituency. (AQW 6069/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department does not at present hold centrally statistics on enforcement cases. To provide accurate figures for the information requested would require manual checking of files which is not only disproportionate in terms of time and cost but would result in un-validated statistics being released. This would be contrary to the Code of Practice for the release of official statistics published in January 2009 ahead of the enactment of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 on 1 April 2009.

My Department has been working to improve the recording of Enforcement Cases, including modifying the existing data base and the inputting of data is ongoing, but this will take some time. When this exercise is complete the data validated statistics on Enforcement will be available.

Distribution of Department Publications

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if he will ensure that MLAs have the choice of receiving reports and consultation documents in either electronic or hard copy form. (AQW 6079/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department follows the guidance issued by OFMdFM on the distribution of publications to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Where there is a statutory requirement to provide hard copies of documents to certain recipients, including political representatives, my Department follows the procedures outlined in the guidance referred to above. In addition, my Department ensures that copies of all documents are available in electronic format and that all recipients are given the option of obtaining a copy in that format.

If there is no requirement for a publication to be laid before the Assembly but it is considered to be of sufficient interest to MLAs then my Department would distribute it to the Assembly by the "Papers Presented" route. Under this procedure copies are sent to the Assembly Business Office with a covering letter asking that it be included on the "Papers Presented" list, to notify MLAs where it can be obtained.

For consultations my Department uses the "Papers Presented" procedure and also writes to MLAs advising that the consultation is taking place and where they can obtain copies of the document, either in hard copy

or electronic format. A standard letter copied to each MLA is sent. The letters are forwarded to Parliament Buildings, to be placed in the MLA pigeonholes.

Rural Planning Strategy

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment how tourist need in Policy 3 of the Department's Rural Planning Strategy is defined for assessing planning applications for tourism accommodation in the countryside. (AQW 6098/09)

Minister of the Environment: There is no definition of tourist need in relation to Policy Tou 3 in the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland.

Rural Planning Strategy

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment whether proposals to extend an existing tourist facility in the countryside to provide complementary tourist accommodation are required to demonstrate tourist need as outlined in Policy TOU 3 of the Rural Planning Strategy. (AQW 6100/09)

Minister of the Environment: In assessing applications for all rural tourist accommodation including a proposal to extend an existing facility the need for the development is material to the determination of a planning application including extensions to existing tourist accommodation. A range of information may be requested by my Department in order to demonstrate a need for tourist accommodation. This will be dependent on the nature, scale and location of the extension to the development and may include one or a number of the following:

- expressions of support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and other appropriate bodies such as local community groups or tourism based organisations;
- expressions of support from local elected representatives and District or Borough Council;
- a 'Tourism Need Statement' which would demonstrate that the development would be in the public interest in terms of inward investment and employment opportunity;
- where applicable, confirmation of grant-aid funding in order to facilitate the tourism accommodation;
- a feasibility study for consideration and assessment by the Economics Branch in the Department for Regional Development which provides this service to the Department;

A minor extension to provide ancillary accommodation eg a toilet block, car park or similar facility would not, however, require this type of assessment.

Rural Planning Strategy

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment what information or details must accompany a planning application for tourist accommodation in the countryside, including proposals to provide accommodation in conjunction with existing tourist facilities, to ensure that it meets the Department's requirement, in Policy TOU 3 of the Rural Planning Strategy that such accommodation should meet a clearly identified tourist need. (AQW 6101/09)

Minister of the Environment: As detailed in AQW 6100/09 in assessing applications for rural tourist accommodation the need for the development is material to the determination of a planning application including extensions to existing tourist accommodation. A range of information may be requested by my Department in order to demonstrate a need for tourist accommodation. This will be dependent on the nature, scale and location of the development proposed and may include one or a number of the following:

- expressions of support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and other appropriate bodies such as local community groups or tourism based organisations;
- expressions of support from local elected representatives;
- a 'Tourism Need Statement' which would demonstrate that the development would be in the public interest in terms of inward investment and employment opportunity;
- where applicable, confirmation of grant-aid funding in order to facilitate the tourism accommodation;

- a feasibility study for consideration and assessment by the Economics Branch in the Department for Regional Development which provides this service to the Department.

However a proposal for a small scale complementary facility e.g. a play area, small recreational building or similar scale and type of facility, which is clearly ancillary to the tourist accommodation would not require such an assessment.

Planning Applications

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what the minimum steps are that an applicant needs to take if their planning application is due to expire in the near future. (AQW 6114/09)

Minister of the Environment: As the timeframe for implementation of a planning approval approaches, an applicant may choose to apply for renewal of planning permission or commence development on the site.

In the consideration of a renewal application refusal would only be considered where;

- there has been some material change in circumstances since the original permission was granted e.g. a change in policy
- continued failure to begin the development will contribute unacceptably to uncertainty about the future pattern of development in the area; or
- The application is premature because the permission has a reasonable time to run.

Over time a number of court and appeal cases have addressed the issue of commencement of development. In deciding whether or not development has commenced, the Department will consider:

- Whether the works carried out are in accordance with the relevant planning permission; and
- Whether the work carried out is material, in the sense that it is not de minimis (meaning something which is so minor as to have no legal consequence)

It is a matter of planning judgement as to whether or not development has commenced at the early stages of a project and the above test provides direction on the issue. Generally this would require

- Compliance with conditions relating to works to be carried out before the commencement of other work e.g. the construction of an access to the required standard; and
- Commencement of any work of construction in the course of the erection of the building such as the digging and pouring foundations etc.

Ten Day Payment Policy

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of the Environment what measures his Department has in place to ensure invoices are paid within ten days. (AQW 6128/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has put certain measures in place to assist in help meeting the new 10 day target for payment of invoices as follows:

- Ensuring that the certification process of invoices is initiated as early as possible;
- Taking particular care at holiday times and other times of staff absence to ensure that invoices are not left unactioned; and
- Ensuring that creditors are aware of the correct billing name and address for invoices.

Projects Planned for North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) projects; and (ii) amount of capital investment planned for the North Down constituency for (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11. (AQW 6153/09)

Minister of the Environment: The table below details the one project planned and the amount involved.

Project Detail	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
Crawfordsburn Country Park – refurbishment of visitors centre and erection of boundary fence	710	-
Total	710	-

Planning Applications

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he will issue Planning Application x/2003/0731 which has been with his Department and has been passed by all of the other relevant bodies. (AQW 6154/09)

Minister of the Environment: A planning permission in respect of application X/2003/0731 was issued by Planning Service on 24th February 2009.

Chicken Waste Plant at Glenavy

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the planning application for a chicken waste plant at Glenavy and if he will ask for a public inquiry into this planning application. (AQW 6158/09)

Minister of the Environment: The planning application, accompanied by an Environmental Statement, for a biomass fuelled power plant at Ballyvannon Road Glenavy was submitted to Planning Service on 4 June 2008. Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 was applied to the proposal on 23 September 2008, designating the proposal as a major application.

The first round of consultations with expert consultees is now complete and has revealed the need for additional environmental information which will be addressed by way of an Addendum to the Environmental Statement. The Addendum was requested on 11 February 2009 and in accordance with the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 the applicants have 3 months from the date of the request to submit the Addendum. Upon receipt of this, Planning Service will re-advertise the application and re-notify neighbours providing the public with an opportunity to comment on the additional environmental information.

Careful consideration of the planning application and associated environmental information, and all representations made in relation to it, is necessary before I would be in a position to decide whether to proceed by way of a public inquiry as the most appropriate action. It would not be appropriate therefore at this stage to indicate whether I would call a public inquiry.

River Pollution

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) enforcement notices have been issued; and (ii) actions have been taken, by his Department in relation to river pollution in the North Down constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6177/09)

Minister of the Environment: Where pollution occurs, it is the policy of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to take formal enforcement action if this is warranted by the severity of the pollution and the circumstances which led to it occurring.

The formal enforcement options available to NIEA in pollution cases include:

- the issuing of an enforcement **warning letter**, or;
- the initiation of **prosecution proceedings**, and / or;
- the issuing of a **Water Order Notice**.

Table A details the number of substantiated pollution incidents and the number of Enforcement Notices issued under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 in each of the last 3 years in the North Down District Council area. Table B details the actions and outcomes to date.

TABLE A – SUBSTANTIATED POLLUTION INCIDENTS AND WATER ORDER ENFORCEMENT NOTICES.

	High Severity	Medium Severity	Low Severity	Enforcement Notices
2006	0	3	23	0
2007	0	5	29	1
2008	0	5	16	0

TABLE B – ACTIONS TAKEN AND OUTCOME (AT 13 MARCH 2009)

	Cases to the Public Prosecution Service	Convictions	Cases Pending	Warning Letters Issued
2006	1	1	0	0
2007	1	0	1	3
2008	0	0	0	1

Reducing Stress in the Workplace

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment, given that stress is the primary reason for absence from work, to outline what actions his Department intends to bring forward to increase motivation and morale and reduce stress levels in the workplace. (AQW 6183/09)

Minister of the Environment: Psychiatric and psychological illnesses, including stress are the main reasons for long-term sickness absence in the NICS. My Department recognises that such illnesses can lead to long-term absence from work. In DOE a significant portion of absence due to stress related illness is attributed to domestic situations or coping with life issues.

Measures are in place to help staff who experience such difficulties, including welfare support and a 24-hour employee assistance programme, which is available to staff and immediate family members. Early intervention in such cases is considered essential and immediate referral to the Occupational Health Service is made.

My Department has developed a pilot programme, Work Bridge, which blends coaching and practical actions to support the member of staff to actively plan, prepare and positively move forward towards a return to wellness at an early stage.

It is currently developing a Health Promotion Strategy to promote the health and well being of staff and we sponsor a range of work health initiatives such as Fitech and the Healthworks programme.

A series of seminars for senior managers have recently taken place to highlight the issue of stress and their responsibilities as managers. This includes detecting the early signs of stress and what action they should take to help those who are experiencing stress symptoms, and where possible, to help them remain at work. Early intervention with support from HR and Support Services is encouraged.

Regular information on health matters is made available to staff through the Department's monthly team brief and other internal publications. Information is posted to the new Health Awareness section of the DOE intranet.

A proactive approach is taken to help individuals who are absent from work due to stress related illness return to work as soon as possible. It is hoped that all these interventions taken together will go some way to improving the motivation and morale across the Department.

Omagh Minerals Limited

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment if Omagh Minerals Limited is breaching any conditions placed against its planning approval. (AQW 6191/09)

Minister of the Environment: I can confirm that my Department is aware of a number of breaches of planning control in respect of the Gold Mine at Cavanacaw, Omagh.

Planning Service Headquarters, Minerals Unit is currently investigating the breach of a number of conditions of planning approval K/1992/0713.

To date the operator has co-operated with the Department and it is anticipated that there will be a satisfactory resolution to all of the breaches of planning control, some of which are technical in nature.

Departmental Accounts

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to outline the process by which his Department's accounts are audited; (ii) who audits his Department's accounts; and (iii) to detail his Department's final audited accounts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6260/09)

Minister of the Environment:

(i) Process

DOE's Resource Accounts are audited under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, and in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards, as issued by the Auditing Practices Board.

Prior to the audit of the annual accounts the department agrees a timetable with the auditors detailing dates for the production and audit of both interim (9 months) and year-end accounts. This enables the audit team to perform most of their audit work before the end of the financial year.

Year-end accounts are formally submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) by the Permanent Secretary (as the principal Accounting Officer) by the end of May to allow sufficient time for the audit process.

The C&AG aims to certify the annual accounts by end of June to enable the accounts to be laid before the Assembly prior to the summer recess.

(ii) The accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), and his staff in the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

(iii) In each of the last three years the DOE accounts received an unqualified true and fair view opinion. The complete accounts for all three years can be found on the DOE website www.doeni.gov.uk. The C&AG's opinions are on pages 52-54 (2007-08), 44-46 (2006-07) and 39-40 (2005-06).

Planning Service

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Planning Service Management Board's referral process from Councils, to detail the meetings they have had with architects/agents (outside of Council delegations) to discuss individual applications, over the past 4 years. (AQW 6269/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Management Board Referral process is part of the consultation arrangements operated for Councils in considering the Department's opinion on the outcome of planning applications. The Council, as part of the process, is afforded the option of a meeting.

Third party attendance at any meeting with a representative of the Management Board or other Headquarters staff is only agreed if this forms part of the Council delegation.

As a consequence, there have been no meetings with architects/agents outside of Council delegations.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Government Transport

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) if any Minister used government transport (ii) in what capacity did they attend the events; and (iii) if the use of government transport was authorised, in relation to attendance at events at the North West 200 in (a) May 2007; and (b) May 2008. (AQW 4111/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): Ministers are supplied with official vehicles to assist them in undertaking their official duties. Guidance has been issued to Ministers on the use of transport and they are not required to seek approval for individual journeys.

Workplace 2010 Project

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the economic circumstances of continuing with the Workplace 2010 project. (AQW 5566/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The impact of continuing with the WP2010 procurement in the current financial circumstances would have been twofold. Firstly, debt finance would have been extremely difficult to secure potentially rendering the project undeliverable at this time and secondly the value for money of the project would probably have been impaired giving rise to an unaffordable deal.

Civil Service

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel the total number of vacant positions in each Civil Service Department and Agency in the Belfast Area. (AQW 5574/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number of vacancies in permanent Civil Service posts located in the Belfast area, within the eleven Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies, is set out in the attached table.

VACANCIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE PERMANENT POSTS LOCATED IN THE BELFAST AREA, IN THE 11 NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR AGENCIES, AT 1 FEBRUARY 2009

Department	Number of Vacant Posts ¹
DARD	88.6
DCAL	26.1
DE	0
DEL	74.1
DETI	35
DFP	206
DHSSPS ²	88.6
DOE	129
DRD	125
DSD ³	327.4
OFMDFM	31
Total	1130.8

1 Vacancies in both industrial and non-industrial permanent posts, on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

2 Figures at 24 February 2009

3 Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division element of DSD vacancies at 20 January 2009.

Capital Infrastructure Projects

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much was spent on capital infrastructure projects, broken down by Departments, in each of the last 10 years. (AQW 5590/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: It is currently not possible to separately identify expenditure on infrastructure projects from other capital investment.

The table attached provides information regarding total net capital investment by Northern Ireland departments for the period 2003-04 to 2007-08. The figures are based on final outturn information whilst changes in budgeting treatment mean that it is not possible to provide comparable figures for the period before 2003-04.

DEPARTMENTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
DARD	32.1	36.1	37.3	42.1	43.2
DCAL	6.9	8.5	16.0	15.3	28.0
DE	145.4	149.6	126.0	132.5	157.2
DEL	39.6	42.7	51.2	53.8	46.1
DETI	33.7	56.6	37.7	24.4	15.0
DFP	41.1	2.3	11.9	43.2	51.0
DHSSPS	121.9	150.4	158.2	189.1	184.5
DOE	8.9	11.7	10.8	13.5	9.5
DRD	253.2	397.5	436.6	423.5	371.9
DSD	7.0	115.1	126.5	68.4	213.0
NIA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.8
OFMDFM	-3.4	0.8	1.9	1.4	2.7
Total	686.5	971.3	1,014.2	1,007.3	1,123.9

Civil Service

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many posts in the Civil Service are currently filled by temporary workers, broken down by (i) Department; and (ii) grade. (AQW 5594/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number and grades of posts in the 11 Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies currently filled by temporary workers are set out in the attached table. The figures, covering both industrial and non-industrial posts, are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis.

For the purpose of this question, the term “temporary workers” covers staff employed on casual or fixed term contracts and agency staff.

NICS POSTS FILLED BY TEMPORARY WORKERS BY DEPARTMENT AND GRADE CASUAL AND FIXED TERM STAFF AT 25 FEBRUARY 2009 AGENCY STAFF AT 23 JANUARY 2009

Department	Grade	Casual /Fixed Term Staff	Agency Staff	Total
Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)	Administrative Officer	3		3
	Administrative Assistant	42	3	45
	Support Grade Band 2	3		3
	Deputy Principal Accountant		1	1
	Staff Officer Accountant		1	1
	Student	3		3
DARD Total		51	5	56

Department	Grade	Casual /Fixed Term Staff	Agency Staff	Total
Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)	Deputy Principal		2	2
	Staff Officer		1	1
	Administrative Assistant	4		4
	Support Grade Band 2	3		3
	Student	1		1
DCAL Total		8	3	11
Education (DE)	Executive Officer		3	3
	AO/AA		4	4
	AA	7		7
	Personal Secretary		1	1
	Receptionist		1	1
	Support Grade Band 2		5	5
DE Total		7	14	21
Employment & Learning (DEL)	Administrative Officer		3	3
	Administrative Assistant	55		55
	Support Grade Band 2	7		7
	Messenger		1	1
	Deputy Principal Accountant		1	1
	Staff Officer Accountant		2	2
	Student	2		2
DEL Total		64	7	71
Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI)	Administrative Assistant	4		4
	Support Grade Band 2	5		5
	Student	1		1
DETI Total		10	0	10
Finance & Personnel (DFP)	Deputy Principal		1	1
	Staff Officer		4	4
	Administrative Officer		51	51
	Administrative Assistant	37	18	55
	Personal Secretary		2	2
	Support Grade Band 2	5	6	11
	Accountant		7	7
	Senior Principal Legal Officer ¹	1		1
	Principal Legal Officer ¹	1		1
	ICT 5 Systems Analyst		1	1
	ICT 4 Programmer Analyst		1	1
	ICT 2 Technician		5	5
	Programmer		1	1
	Registered Nurse		1	1
	Healthcare Assistant		1	1
	Professional Technical Officer		9	9
	Architectural Technician		3	3
	Student	26		26
DFP Total		70	111	181

Department	Grade	Casual /Fixed Term Staff	Agency Staff	Total
Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS)	Administrative Assistant	13	4	17
	Personal Secretary		2	2
	Support Grade Band 2	6		6
	Deputy Principal Accountant		1	1
	ICT 4 Programmer Analyst		1	1
	Student	1		1
DHSSPS Total		20	8	28
Environment (DOE) ²	Staff Officer		3	3
	Executive Officer 1/Professional Technical Officers	15	42	57
	Executive Officer 2		14	14
	Administrative Officer		61	61
	Administrative Assistant	75	21	96
	Industrial		34	34
DOE Total		90	175	265
Regional Development (DRD)	Deputy Principal		1	1
	Staff Officer		1	1
	Executive Officer 2		2	2
	Administrative Officer		20	20
	Administrative Assistant	12	22	34
	Personal Secretary		1	1
	Typist		1	1
	Porter		1	1
	Accountant		1	1
	Deputy Principal Accountant		2	2
	Staff Officer Accountant		4	4
	PTO		3	3
	Technical Grade 1		2	2
	Technical Grade 2		5	5
Industrial	29		29	
DRD Total		41	66	107
Social Development (DSD) ³	Administrative Officer	1	2	3
	Administrative Assistant	190.2	45	235.2
	Personal Secretary	1		1
	Support Grade Band 2	59	12	71
	Staff Officer Accountant	2		2
	Medical Attendant	1.6		1.6
	Student	2		2
DSD Total		256.8	59	315.8
Office of the First & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)	Administrative Assistant	1	1	2
OFMDFM Total		1	1	2
NICS TOTAL		618.8	449	1067.8

1 Staff on Fixed Term contract

2 DOE agency figures at 25 February 2009

3 Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division element of DSD casual staff at 20 January 2009

Domestic Regional Rate

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much the freeze on the domestic regional rate will cost his Department, in each year between 2008 and 2011. (AQW 5690/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: If it is assumed that the domestic regional rate would have increased year on year in line with inflation at, say, 2.7%, this would result in a cost in the region of £7.2m for each year on a cumulative basis. Since revenue from regional rates is not linked to any particular spending programme, the reduction in revenue means that the Executive has less money available to allocate to all Departments.

Events on the Grounds of Stormont Estate

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has received any requests for events to take place on the grounds of Stormont Estate between April and September 2009. (AQW 5741/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Yes, I have received a number of requests for events to take place on the grounds of Stormont Estate between April and September 2009.

Councillor Info Project

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to make a statement on the success of the councillor.info project, and if further funding for this initiative will be made available by his Department. (AQW 5762/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Delivery Innovation Division (DID) within DFP financed a pilot project, councillor.info (www.councillor.info), through the former e-Government Fund. The e-Government fund was a direct result of the e-participation review carried out by OFMDFM in 2004/05. This review was carried out by the then Northern Ireland e Government Unit (NIeGU) now DID in DFP. As a result the e-Government fund sponsored several projects with one of the last of these being the councillor.info project. The aim of the pilot was to use modern technology to stimulate direct interaction between councillors and their electorate. The pilot project commenced in February 2008 and will run until the end of March 2009: a post project evaluation has yet to be completed.

Whilst experimental in nature, initial indications have shown that the project has been well received by a significant number of Councillors.

As a pilot project, my Department made it clear that it would only cover the first year costs and that funding thereafter would be the responsibility of individual Councils.

DFP has no resource to fund this project further.

STATISTICS

Council	No. signed up	No. not updated website	%	No. updated website	%	No. regularly updated	% of total	% of updated
Antrim	8	1	12.5	7	87.5	3	37.5	42.86
Ards	14	4	28.6	10	71.4	4	28.57	40
Armagh	7	1	14.3	6	85.7	5	71.43	83.33
Ballymena	4	1	25	3	75	2	50	66.67
Ballymoney	1	1	100	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	3	2	66.67	1	23.23	1	33.34	100
Belfast	12	3	25	9	75	3	25	33.34
Carrick	10	1	10	9	90	1	10	11.11
Castlereagh	11	1	9.09	10	90.91	4	36.36	40
Coleraine	9	2	22.22	7	77.78	5	55.56	71.43

Council	No. signed up	No. not updated website	%	No. updated website	%	No. regularly updated	% of total	% of updated
Cookstown	5	1	20	4	80	3	60	75
Craigavon	8	4	50	4	50	1	12.5	25
Derry	16	3	18.75	13	81.25	3	18.75	23.08
Down	13	2	15.38	11	84.62	4	30.77	36.36
Dungannon	3	2	66.67	1	23.23	1	33.34	100
Fermanagh	10	4	40	6	60	2	20	33.34
Larne	5	0	0	5	100	0	0	0
Limavady	3	0	0	3	100	3	100	100
Lisburn	17	4	23.53	13	76.47	2	11.76	15.38
Magherafelt	2	0	0	2	100	0	0	0
Moyle	1	0	0	1	100	0	0	0
Newry and Mourne	13	4	30.77	9	69.23	3	23.08	33.34
Newtownabbey	9	2	22.22	7	77.78	1	11.11	14.29
North Down	14	4	28.57	10	61.43	6	42.86	60
Omagh	19	7	36.84	12	63.16	6	31.58	50
Strabane	5	2	40	3	60	2	40	66.67
Total	222	56	25.23	166	74.67	62	27.93	37.35

- Regularly updated websites are defined by having at least 5 articles added since the project began.

Civil Service

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what steps they intend to take to ensure there is no conflict of interest issues when senior civil servants leave the NICS and take up senior positions in the private sector. (AQW 5781/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The procedures governing the acceptance of business appointments by civil servants are set out in paragraph 1.7.1 and Annex 4 of the Conduct section of the NICS Staff Handbook and they apply to the acceptance of appointments within business and other bodies.

The current rules require that within 2 years of leaving Civil Service employment, a civil servant is to obtain the approval of the former employing department before accepting any offer of employment.

The procedures require an individual to submit an application for approval that includes full details of the proposed appointment and details of any official dealings with the prospective employer, or knowledge which might give the prospective employer an advantage over competitors.

The rules were introduced to protect the NICS and individual members of staff from suspicion of impropriety in the event that they may wish to take up an appointment with an outside body on leaving the service. They allow for restrictions to be applied such as delaying acceptance of an appointment (a waiting period) or restrictions on the type of work which the individual may be involved with for a period of time. However, conditions such as these should, and are, only applied where there is a specific cause for concern such as the contact that the individual had with the company involved or its competitors during the course of their official duties.

Senior Civil Servants

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for its assessment of senior Civil Servants joining the boards of banks that have close financial relationships with the public sector. (AQW 5838/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Business Appointments Rules governing the acceptance of appointments by civil servants are set out in the Conduct Section of the NICS Staff Handbook and they apply to the acceptance of appointments within business and other bodies.

These rules exist to counter suspicion that a serving civil servant might be influenced by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular business or organisation; and to avoid the risk that a particular business or organisation might gain an unfair advantage over competitors by employing former civil servants. These rules are consistent with those applied in GB and are applied to all relevant appointments in Northern Ireland.

Inspectors of Education

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to provide the number; and (ii) religious breakdown of Inspectors of Education in each Education and Library Board. (AQW 5879/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Inspectors of Education are members of the NI Civil Service and are employed by the Department of Education. The community background profile of this group is set out below:-

Protestant	Roman Catholic	Not Determined	Total
36	26	0	62

Third Level Education College Staff

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if a business case for payment of arrears to third level education college staff has been submitted to his Department and if so, when agreement to the payment of arrears is expected. (AQW 5889/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: A business case has not been received in my Department in respect of a pay award for third level education college staff.

Efficiency Savings

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what the outcome of discussions were with the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment about efficiency savings. (AQW 5897/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: In the context of Budget 2008-2011 all departments were required to deliver 3% per annum efficiency savings. In bilateral discussions with the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, agreement was reached in relation to how the Minister's department would deliver the required target. Efficiency Delivery Plans, setting out the detail of these efficiency savings, are available on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's website, www.detini.gov.uk

Asymptomatic Plural Plaques

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to his answer to AQW 92/09, for an update on the consultation for compensation to people suffering from asymptomatic plural plaques. (AQW 5994/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: On 13 October 2008 my Department issued a consultation paper which explored the House of Lords' ruling in the Johnston case regarding asymptomatic pleural plaques and invited views on how people in Northern Ireland with pleural plaques could be supported and assisted. The consultation exercise concluded on 12 January 2009 and a preliminary analysis of the responses has been compiled. I am currently considering that analysis and will be assessing the available policy options with a view to determining the way forward.

Civil Service

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he expects to commence the payments to Civil Service staff entitled to the equal pay claim. (AQW 6034/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Officials are currently in discussions with NIPSA about the equal pay issue facing the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a series of meetings are underway in order to establish the potential for an agreed settlement. As discussions with NIPSA have yet to be concluded and the equal pay claims already lodged are now the subject of legal processes in the Industrial Tribunal, you will appreciate that I am unable to provide any further specific details at present. The equal pay issues in the Civil Service are of a very significant scale and complexity and therefore it may yet take some time before I can confirm how they will be finally resolved.

Drug Related Deaths

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people on prescription drugs have died as a result of addiction, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6059/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: In total 86 deaths were registered in Northern Ireland in 2007 where the cause of death was drug related¹, either due to legal or illegal drugs, this compares to 91 deaths in 2006 and 84 deaths in 2005. It is not possible to ascertain whether the deceased was addicted to any drugs mentioned on the death certificate or if the deceased was receiving any prescription drugs.

- 1 - International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes:
- F11-F16, F18-F19 - Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)
- X40-X44 - Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
- X60-X64 - Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
- X85 – Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
- Y10-Y14 - Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent.

Drug Related Deaths

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide figures for those who have died from addiction to non-prescription drugs, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 6065/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: In total 86 deaths were registered in Northern Ireland in 2007 where the cause of death was drug related¹, either due to legal or illegal drugs, this compares to 91 deaths in 2006 and 84 deaths in 2005. It is not possible to ascertain whether the deceased was addicted to any drugs mentioned on the death certificate.

- 1 - International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes:
- F11-F16, F18-F19 - Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)
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- X85 – Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances.
- Y10-Y14 - Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent.

Distribution of Department Publications

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he will ensure that MLAs have the choice of receiving reports and consultation documents in either electronic or hard copy form. (AQW 6080/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: My Department adheres to the OFMDFM guidance on Distribution of Department Publications and Consultation Documents.

This guidance outlines that it is a matter of choice for recipients how they receive Government publications. The opportunity to receive publications by electronic means is available if requested.

Civil Service

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the required business case for pay increases for Civil Servants has not yet been approved. (AQW 6173/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Officials are currently in discussions with NIPSA about the equal pay issue facing the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a series of meetings are underway in order to establish the potential for an agreed settlement. As discussions with NIPSA have yet to be concluded and the equal pay claims already lodged are now the subject of legal processes in the Industrial Tribunal, you will appreciate that I am unable to provide any further specific details at present. The equal pay issues in the Civil Service are of a very significant scale and complexity and therefore it may yet take some time before I can confirm how they will be finally resolved.

Civil Service

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on how and when the outstanding claims for Civil Service staff will be received. (AQW 6239/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Officials are currently in discussions with NIPSA about the equal pay issue facing the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a series of meetings are underway in order to establish the potential for an agreed settlement. As discussions with NIPSA have yet to be concluded and the equal pay claims already lodged are now the subject of legal processes in the Industrial Tribunal, you will appreciate that I am unable to provide any further specific details at present. The equal pay issues in the Civil Service are of a very significant scale and complexity and therefore it may yet take some time before I can confirm how they will be finally resolved.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Muscular Skeletal Conditions

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what work his Department has undertaken on frameworks for muscular skeletal conditions. (AQW 5854/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Work is ongoing to develop service frameworks for cardiovascular health and wellbeing; respiratory health and wellbeing; cancer prevention, treatment and care; mental health and wellbeing; learning disability; children and young people's health and wellbeing; and older people's health and wellbeing.

It is anticipated that additional priority areas for service framework development will be taken forward. These will be drawn from the remaining priorities identified and evaluated by the Department. These include musculoskeletal conditions, physical disability and sensory impairment, sexual health and diabetes.

User Led Self Management

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to promote user led self management for long term conditions such as arthritis; and how his Department is engaging with the voluntary and community sectors on this. (AQW 5855/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The introduction of self management and patient education programmes is an essential element of my Department's approach to the more effective management of people with chronic conditions in the community. A wide range of self-management programmes is available. Some can be professionally-led and others can be delivered by patients or service users. It is a matter for HSC Boards working with healthcare professionals and voluntary organisations to decide on the most appropriate programmes to be delivered to individuals or to groups of people with long term conditions, including arthritis.

My officials met recently with the Long Term Conditions Alliance, which is an umbrella body representing a range of voluntary organisations including Arthritis Care, to discuss how voluntary organisations can contribute to the uptake of patient education and self-management programmes.

Urology Treatment

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when East Antrim constituents will be able to receive urology treatment at Antrim Hospital and not have to travel at extra expense to Causeway Hospital, Coleraine. (AQW 5862/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A regional review of adult urology services in Northern Ireland is underway at present. The purpose of the review is to make recommendations for a model of service which will ensure quality urology services are provided in the right place, at the right time by the most appropriate clinician, through the entire care pathway from Primary Care to Intermediate to Secondary and Tertiary Care. Part of this work has also included a review of workforce planning and training / development needs of staff.

The Review Report will inform the future distribution of urology services across Northern Ireland, including the Northern Trust area, and is likely to be completed by the end of March.

The number of urology patients referred to other parts of the UK for treatment in the last 12 months is set out in the table below broken down by Health and Social Services Board of residence.

	No. of patients	Travel & accom. costs (patients) (£)	Treatment costs (£)	Cost for patient escorts (£)	Total cost (£)
NHSSB	11	6,265*	11,086	-	17,351
EHSSB	24	13,392	60,000**	5,066	78,458
	118**	-	-	-	-
SHSSB	11	6,537*	58,685	-	65,222
WHSSB	9	3,013	8,284***	4,736	16,033
Total	173	29,207	138,055	9,802	177,064

Source: Health & Social Services Boards

Notes:

* NHSSB & SHSSB unable to separate patient and escort travel and accommodation costs so this reflects the total for both

** Reflects those patients referred to the Independent Sector as part of a waiting list initiative – costs have still to be finalised

*** This figure is an estimate based on an average cost of £2,500 per treatment as not all invoices have been received yet

*** This figure does not reflect the total patient treatment cost from the WHSSB area as not all invoices have been received yet.

Urology Treatment

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when staffing infrastructure along with better training opportunities, will be put into place in hospitals to enable a more efficient urology service to be provided, minimising the need to send patients to other parts of the United Kingdom. (AQW 5863/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A regional review of adult urology services in Northern Ireland is underway at present. The purpose of the review is to make recommendations for a model of service which will ensure quality urology services are provided in the right place, at the right time by the most appropriate clinician, through the entire care pathway from Primary Care to Intermediate to Secondary and Tertiary Care. Part of this work has also included a review of workforce planning and training / development needs of staff.

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Urology Treatment

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of vacancies in urology departments broken down by Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 5864/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of current vacancies in urology departments is given by Trust in the table below. The Belfast, Northern and Western HSC Trusts have stated that they have no current vacancies.

Trust	Grade	Number of current vacancies in urology departments	
		Headcount	WTE
South Eastern	Ward Sister Band 6	1	1
Southern	Specialist Registrar	1	1
	Admin Band 2	3	2.01
	Admin Band 5 (Split post)	1	0.5

Source: Health & Social Care Trusts

Notes:

1. WTE = whole-time equivalent.
2. The Ward Sister Band 6 vacancy with in the South Eastern Trust is in a General Surgical ward, which includes Urology.
3. A current vacancy is defined as an unoccupied post which the organisation is actively trying to fill.

Urology Treatment

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to patients receiving urology treatment in other parts of the UK, to detail (i) the number of patients; (ii) their travel costs; (iii) their treatment costs; and (iv) the travel and accommodation costs of friends and families, in the last 12 months. (AQW 5869/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A regional review of adult urology services in Northern Ireland is underway at present. The purpose of the review is to make recommendations for a model of service which will ensure quality urology services are provided in the right place, at the right time by the most appropriate clinician, through the entire care pathway from Primary Care to Intermediate to Secondary and

Tertiary Care. Part of this work has also included a review of workforce planning and training / development needs of staff.

The Review Report will inform the future distribution of urology services across Northern Ireland, including the Northern Trust area, and is likely to be completed by the end of March.

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Notes:

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** This figure is an estimate based on an average cost of £2,500 per treatment as not all invoices have been received yet

***This figure does not reflect the total patient treatment cost from the WHSSB area as not all invoices have been received yet.

Ravara House Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his meeting with Lady Hermon MP and myself at Ravara House will lead to a swift decision on the future of Ravara House Bangor.

(AQW 5880/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The South Eastern Trust's public consultation period on the proposals for the future of three statutory residential homes, including Ravara House, ended on 12th February 2009. The Trust will now consider the outcomes of the consultation before making a decision on the future of each of the homes. My Department will also monitor the responses to the consultation. Should the Trust's decision be to proceed with closure, I will make the final decision on the proposal. This process must be allowed to run its course without intervention.

If I am required to make a decision, before doing so, I will take account of the views expressed by all those who took part in the consultation process, and the needs of older people in the area now and in the future. I will also be concerned to take into account the position of the staff. But my primary consideration will be the health and well-being of the people who are currently resident in these Trust-run homes.

Residential Respite Care

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many families with members who have autism qualify for residential respite care and how many are receiving their allocated quota, in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 5882/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As at, 10 March 2009, 40 families with members who have autism, within the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCCT) qualify for residential respite care. The Trust indicated they have no set quota for each family, though they operate a prescribed upper limit of six weeks per family.

Residential Respite Care

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children and adults with challenging behaviour qualify for residential respite care in the Western Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 5883/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are 44 adults and 4 children in the Western Health and Social Care Trust who exhibit challenging behaviours and would qualify for residential respite care.

Residential Respite Facilities

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what residential respite facilities are available for children and adults with challenging behaviour, in the Western Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 5884/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Western Health and Social Care Trust offer residential respite facilities for children with challenging behaviour at Shepherds Way and Beltany House. Residential respite care for adults with challenging behaviour is provided at The Respite Cottages and Beltany House. Adults who have challenging behaviour which poses a potential danger to themselves or others, have on occasions received respite in Lakeview Hospital.

Prescribed Medication

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has any plans to commission research into the level of addiction to prescribed medication. (AQW 5916/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department is aware of the growing concern about the misuse of “prescription drugs”, and there is a range of survey work undertaken by the Department to uncover the level of use and misuse of prescription medication in Northern Ireland.

The Drug Addicts Index holds information on those whom “a doctor considers to be or has reasonable grounds to suspect is addicted to” a list of controlled drugs, some of which are prescribed drugs. The latest Drug Addict Index Annual Statistical bulletin was published on 5 March 2009.

Prevalence rates on the use of (though not addiction to) sedatives and tranquilisers and anti-depressants in Northern Ireland were previously published in Bulletin 1 (published in January 2008) of the 2006/2007 Drug Prevalence Survey. The relevant figures are set out in the table below:

	Anti-Depressants	Sedatives and Tranquillisers	Other Opiates
Lifetime use	21%	20%	20%
Last year use	9%	9%	8%
Last Month use	8%	7%	5%

Further details from the Survey can be found at:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/first-results-200607-drug-prevalence-survey.pdf>

It should be noted that the next bulletin from the Drug Prevalence Survey is due to be published shortly and it will provide a more detailed analysis of data on the use of sedatives and tranquilisers and anti-depressants.

The Drug Misuse Database holds information on people presenting to treatment services with problem drug misuse. The annual statistical bulletin provides an analysis of the main drug of misuse of people presenting for treatment. Some of these drugs such as benzodiazepines, codeine and paracetamol, are prescribed medication. According to the most recent information (published in October 2008) benzodiazepines were the second most commonly reported main drug of misuse (reported by 31% of individuals), Codeine & paracetamol were reported as the main drug of misuse by just 2%. Again further information can be found at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/dmd_bulletin_2007-08.pdf

With all this information it is not possible to establish if the drugs have been obtained on prescription by an individual or through another source.

The Department is beginning the process the review the ongoing implementation of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD). As part of this work the Department will consider all relevant information, seek further research where necessary, to inform the ongoing development process, and decide if further action is required on specific issues, such as the misuse of prescription drugs.

Nursing Staff

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money has been spent on recruiting temporary nursing staff through recruitment agencies in the last year, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 5917/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Auxiliary Staff

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money has been spent on recruiting temporary auxiliary staff through recruitment agencies in the last year, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 5918/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Clostridium Difficile

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what costs have been incurred by the outbreak of Clostridium difficile in Craigavon Area Hospital through (i) the closure of beds; and (ii) longer inpatient stays. (AQW 5919/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is not available.

Alcoholic Drinks

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to introduce (i) legislation which stops cut-price offers on alcoholic drinks; and (ii) a minimum price per alcoholic unit as proposed in Scotland. (AQW 5920/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Addressing alcohol misuse, particularly binge and young people's drinking, is a key priority for my Department. To this end, my Department has led in the development of a Young People's Drinking Action Plan that seeks to co-ordinate action to tackle this issue. This plan is currently with my Executive colleagues for consideration.

The Young People's Drinking Action Plan raises both the issues of cut-price offers on alcoholic drinks and minimum unit pricing, and these are areas which will need further consideration across the Executive as responsibility for these issues does not lie with my Department. There may also be issues in relation to EU Legislation and Competition Laws, and I will therefore be watching the developments in Scotland with great interest.

Craigavon Area Hospital

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the occupancy rate of acute beds has been in Craigavon Area Hospital, over the past 12 months. (AQW 5922/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of available and occupied beds is collected on a quarterly basis, with the most recent being the quarter ending 31st December 2008. Occupancy

rates are calculated from these data. The occupancy rate for acute beds in Craigavon Area Hospital, is shown in the table below, for each quarter and overall for the 12 months ending 31st December 2008.

Quarter Ending	Average Available Beds	Average Occupied Beds	Occupancy Rate
31-Mar-08	378.8	301.8	79.7%
30-Jun-08 ^(P)	394.1	319.3	81.0%
30-Sep-08 ^(P)	394.7	289.3	73.3%
31-Dec-08 ^(P)	397.8	304.6	76.6%
Overall	391.4	303.7	77.6%

Source: Departmental KH03a Return

(P) Data are provisional.

Gynaecological Referrals

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current average waiting time for urgent gynaecological referrals in the Southern Health and Social Services Trust area, and what measures are being taken to reduce the waiting time. (AQW 5925/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: All urgent “Red Flag” referrals to gynaecology are seen within a two week target. For other urgent referrals the Southern Trust aims for them to be seen within 4 weeks though there is clinical discretion to decide the level of urgency of individual cases. Routine referrals should be seen within the current target of 13 weeks the target for these appointments will reduce to 9 weeks from 1 April.

My Department continues to work towards reducing waiting times for all patients. Each Trust is currently working towards the targets that by March 2009, no patient should wait longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment, 9 weeks for a diagnostic test, and 13 weeks for inpatient or daycase treatment.

Cervical Cancer Screening Tests

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there has been an increased uptake of cervical cancer screening tests in recent months following the publicity about Jade Goody. (AQW 5928/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Data on cervical smear tests are not held centrally by the Department.

It is too early to state if there has been a significant increase in the uptake of cervical screening smear tests. Cervical screening laboratories have reported an increase in the number of smear tests taken over the past few months. It is not yet known if the increase comprises mainly women who already have regular smear tests attending for an earlier smear because of increased publicity or if it comprises a significant number of women who previously had not attended regularly or at all.

Respite Care Provision

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of respite care provision in the North Down area. (AQW 5932/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A range of respite services are available in the North Down area of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, including domiciliary supports, direct payments, provision of day care, community based inclusive activities and overnight respite in registered accommodation. Whilst my Department is currently undertaking work to provide a clearer and fuller picture of current and future respite provision and need, the Trust is taking a number of steps to address any gaps in respite provision including investing in additional respite beds in the non statutory sector, recruitment of specialist fostering placements, family support and domiciliary care inputs.

Smoking Related Illnesses

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been diagnosed with smoking related illnesses over the last three years. (AQW 5933/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the total number of persons that have been diagnosed with smoking related diseases within the last three years is not available.

Smoking Related Illnesses

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of whether the general health of the public has improved since the banning of smoking in public places. (AQW 5934/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Smoke-free legislation was introduced in April 2007 specifically to protect the public and employees from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. I believe, as a result of this, the general health of our population will undoubtedly improve. Smoking related illnesses take many years to manifest in an individual; consequently the overall impact of smoke-free legislation on health improvement cannot be meaningfully measured within the short period since the introduction of the ban.

My department has undertaken research to determine changes in smoking trends and in second-hand smoke exposure following the introduction of smoke-free legislation. The results are very encouraging and show, for example, that smoking prevalence among adults fell from 25% in 2006/07 to 23% in 2007/08; that over 21,000 people set quit dates in 2007/08; and that three months after introduction of smoke-free legislation there was a 94% reduction in fine air particulates and a 92% reduction in air nicotine levels in sampled bars. The results of this preliminary research will be published shortly in "Smoke-free Legislation in Northern Ireland – A One Year Review."

Sudden Cardiac Deaths in Young People

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the increasing number of sudden cardiac deaths in young people. (AQW 5939/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer the member to the answer I gave to AQO 2203/09.

Reducing Stress in the Workplace

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety given that stress is the primary reason for absence from work, what action he intends to take to improve motivation and morale and reduce stress in the workplace. (AQW 5949/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department recognises that stress related illnesses whether work related or not, can lead to long term absence from work. All stress related absences are investigated immediately and prompt action is taken to ensure staff receive the appropriate support. The measures currently in place to support staff who are suffering from a stress related illness are assistance from the Welfare Service and an employee assistance programme which is available 24/7 for both employees and immediate family members. If appropriate, an immediate referral to the Occupational Health Service can also be arranged.

The NICS Workplace Health Committee published a comprehensive booklet on Mental Wellbeing in 1999. This booklet provided advice and guidance to Departments and employees across the NICS on the commitment to Mental Wellbeing at work. The booklet, which was issued to every member of staff, was aimed at creating a much greater awareness about mental health at work and provided detailed guidance on tackling stress. This guidance is currently under review and a revised Mental Well-being policy will issue in due course.

Consideration is also being given to undertaking an NICS-wide stress survey. It is hoped that the results of the survey will help inform and influence policy direction and target potential stress "hotspots"

Diabetes

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been diagnosed with diabetes in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 5968/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of children diagnosed with diabetes each year is not available.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has held with rheumatoid arthritis groups or organisations. (AQW 6009/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have not held any discussions with rheumatoid arthritis groups or organisations. However, my officials recently met a representative from the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society to discuss services for people with rheumatoid arthritis.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he plans to follow the lead in Wales and Scotland and implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on rheumatoid arthritis medication and treatment. (AQW 6010/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department has confirmed the application of three NICE technology appraisals for Northern Ireland in respect of biologic (anti-TNF) drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, subject to the conditions in the associated guidelines:

- TA 126 – recommending that abatacept is not used
- TA 130 – recommending that adalimumab, etanercept and infliximab are used subject to certain conditions
- TA 141 – recommending that Rituximab is used in certain circumstances.

Implementation is being taken forward in the context of the Public Service Agreement target to achieve a 21-week waiting time for drug therapies for treatment of severe arthritis by March 2011.

NICE has also recently published a clinical guideline on the management of rheumatoid arthritis in adults. This is currently being reviewed for its applicability to Northern Ireland and guidance on its implementation will be issued to the HSC.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how long do patients with symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis spend on a waiting list to see a consultant, and how does this compare with other regions of the United Kingdom. (AQW 6011/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of patients with symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis waiting to see a consultant is not collected by the Department. Provision of such data by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, and other health care providers in the rest of the United Kingdom, would incur a disproportionate cost.

Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total administrative costs broken down by Health and Social Care Trust, in the last financial year. (AQW 6028/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information is available on the payroll costs of administrative staff for the financial year 2007/08:

Trust	£
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	80,067,393
Northern Health and Social Care Trust	49,457,422
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	32,891,414
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	35,855,154
Western Health and Social Care Trust	33,267,611
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	1,589,166

The above figures are taken from a direct download of the payroll system for each Trust.

Some 1700 administration job reductions are anticipated across the Health Service as a result of the Review of Public Administration and it is estimated that around 1000 of these have been achieved since April 2007.

Craigavon Area Hospital

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there is a new outbreak of a vomiting bug in Craigavon Area Hospital, and if so, (i) which wards are affected; and (ii) how it is being addressed. (AQW 6032/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that there is no new outbreak of a vomiting bug at Craigavon Area Hospital.

Speech, Language and Communications Problems

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children are receiving help with (i) speech; (ii) language; and (iii) communication problems, in each of the Health and Social Care Trusts. (AQW 6035/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times patients were transferred, in an emergency, to hospitals in vehicles other than emergency ambulances, over the past five years, by accident and emergency department. (AQW 6036/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is currently unavailable.

People with Learning Disabilities

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the budget for; and (ii) how the budget is spent on, people with learning disabilities, in each Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 6042/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below shows how the £197m budget was planned to be spent on Learning Disability Services in 2008/09 across the five Health and Social Care Trusts. The pattern of expenditure is based on Trusts local knowledge and their understanding of the demand for services in their area. Belfast Trust accounts for a substantial amount of hospital care due to the regional services they provide.

	Belfast (£m)	Northern (£m)	Southern (£m)	South Eastern (£m)	Western (£m)	Total (£m)
Allied Health Professionals	1.3	2.4	2.5	1.0	0.5	7.7
Daycare (Social Services Attendances)	6.7	8.3	8.1	6.9	7.4	37.4

	Belfast (£m)	Northern (£m)	Southern (£m)	South Eastern (£m)	Western (£m)	Total (£m)
Learning Disability Nurses	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	4.3
Domiciliary Care	3.4	1.3	2.7	1.4	1.9	10.7
Hospital Care	23.1	0.2	8.5	0.0	3.7	35.5
Nursing & Residential Care	13.3	15.2	12.1	14.1	9.1	63.8
Social Work	2.0	3.0	2.3	1.3	2.1	10.7
Other Community Services	0.3	2.3	2.5	4.2	1.1	10.4
Other PSS	2.7	5.6	3.4	1.8	3.0	16.5
Total Trust Expenditure	53.6	39.1	43.0	31.5	29.8	197.0

Source: SRF 2008/09. Figures may not total due to rounding

Care for the Elderly

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the budget for; and (ii) how the budget is spent on, 'care for the elderly', in each Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 6043/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below shows that Health and Social Care Trusts planned to spend £576.2m on Programme of Care 4, Elderly Care in 2008/09. Of this 37.4% was to be spent on Residential and Nursing Home Care.

	Belfast (£m)	Northern (£m)	Southern (£m)	South Eastern (£m)	Western (£m)	Total (£m)
Aids and Adaptations	0.6	2.6	0.6	0.7	1.2	5.6
Allied Health Professionals	4.7	4.8	4.8	2.6	2.5	19.4
Daycare (Social Services Attendances)	4.1	2.5	2.9	1.4	2.0	12.9
District Nursing	8.5	7.4	7.3	6.4	5.0	34.5
Domiciliary Care	27.8	29.3	20.5	22.3	16.2	116.1
Geriatric Medicine	23.5	12.0	17.0	15.9	14.8	83.1
Nursing & Residential Home Care	50.3	51.5	38.0	44.3	31.7	215.8
Old Age Psychiatry	3.6	7.6	5.8	3.3	6.4	26.7
Social Work	6.6	6.4	4.0	2.8	6.0	25.8
Other Community Services	8.2	7.4	4.2	2.8	3.0	25.7
Other PSS	2.9	0.7	0.2	4.1	2.7	10.7
Total Trust Expenditure	140.9	132.1	105.3	106.6	91.4	576.2

Source: SRF 2008/09. Figures may not total due to rounding and do not include any services delivered to those aged 65 + in Acute Hospital Services, Mental Health, Learning Disabled or Physical & Sensory Disabled Programmes of Care.

Diabetes

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been diagnosed with diabetes, broken down by constituency, in the last year. (AQW 6063/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of children diagnosed with diabetes in the last year is not available.

Prescription Drugs

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people on prescription drugs have addiction problems, and have attended the addiction clinic, in each the last 3 years.

(AQW 6066/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information in the form requested is not available.

Lough Cuan House Residential Home

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, now that the South Eastern Health and Social Services Trust consultation process has concluded, will he visit Lough Cuan House Residential Home at the earliest convenient time.

(AQW 6113/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have recently visited a number of the statutory residential homes, across the various Trust regions, which have been subject to the reform and modernisation proposals and it is my intention to visit Loch Cuan in Newtownards when my diary permits.

Termination of Pregnancy Guidelines

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will publish the guidelines on the termination of pregnancy, which were recently passed by the Executive.

(AQW 6165/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department will issue Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy shortly.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are in place in the vicinity of schools in the Lagan Valley constituency.

(AQW 5777/09)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has developed its Safer Routes to Schools programme, with the aim of tackling the problems caused by the continuing growth of the use of cars, for the 'School Run'. It is anticipated that this will be achieved, by raising the awareness of the major issues related to increased congestion, including the detrimental impact on road safety, health and the environment. In addition, the programme aims to provide measures to encourage increased use of sustainable travel options for the school journey, such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.

Where appropriate, the Safer Routes to School programme provides traffic management improvements outside schools, as well as curriculum based education and awareness resources, travel surveys, information leaflets, road safety training and initiatives, to encourage a modal shift away from the car, for the school run.

The table below includes the traffic management improvements which have been provided at schools within the Lagan Valley constituency:

School Name	Address	Measures Provided
Moira Primary School	Backwood Road, Moira	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
Derriaghy Primary School	Derriaghy Road, Derriaghy	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
Ballymacward Primary School	Rock Road, Stoneyford	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
Carr Primary School	Hillsborough Road, Carryduff	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
Ballinderry Primary School	Crumlin Road, Lower Ballinderry	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.

School Name	Address	Measures Provided
Maghaberry Primary School	Maghaberry Road, Maghaberry	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
St Patricks High School	Ballinderry Road, Lisburn	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
St Aloysius Primary School	Ballinderry Road, Lisburn	Flashing school signs, red surfacing.
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	The Cutts, Derriaghy	Flashing school signs, red surfacing with 'School Safety Zone' worded markings.
The Wallace High School	Clonevin Park, Lisburn	Flashing school signs, red surfacing with 'School Safety Zone' worded markings.
Friends School	Magheralave Road, Lisburn	Flashing school signs, red surfacing with 'School Safety Zone' worded markings.

Park and Ride Facilities

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development what park and ride facilities are currently operational in the Lagan Valley constituency. (AQW 5778/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Within the Lagan Valley constituency there are two park and ride facilities provided in connection with rail travel. These are located at Lisburn train station and at the Moira rail halt.

In addition, there are two bus-based park and ride facilities on the M1 corridor at Sprucefield and at Blacks Road. These were implemented as part of the traffic management measures, during the M1/Westlink project construction period.

Ten Day Payment Target

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development how much of the total amount due to suppliers was paid within the ten day payment target, in the last year. (AQW 5822/09)

Minister for Regional Development: In the period 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009, the Department for Regional Development made payment to suppliers totalling £260.3 million. Of this amount, £157.2 million (60.4%) was paid within ten working days.

Park and Ride Facilities

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what park and ride facilities are operational in the North Down constituency. (AQW 5830/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Within the North Down constituency there are currently four park and ride facilities provided in connection with rail travel. These are located at Bangor, Holywood, Helens Bay and Carnlea rail stations and provide, in total, approximately 180 parking spaces.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what additional traffic calming measures are to be introduced in the vicinity of schools in the North Down constituency. (AQW 5831/09)

Minister for Regional Development: In my reply to the Member's recent Assembly Question, AQW 1968/09, I advised that my Department's Roads Service is committed to installing road safety facilities outside schools, as part of the Travelwise Safer Routes to Schools initiative, and of the type of measures involved.

I would also refer the Member to my recent reply to his Assembly Question, AQW 5832/09, in which I provided details of traffic management improvements which have been provided at schools within the North Down constituency.

The Programme of Work for the 2009/10 financial year has not yet been set. I have asked the Divisional Roads Manager to write to you, when the programme has been confirmed early in the new financial year.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are in place in the vicinity of schools in the North Down constituency. (AQW 5832/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has developed its Safer Routes to Schools programme, with the aim of tackling the problems caused by the continuing growth of the use of cars, for the 'school run'. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by raising the awareness of the major issues related to increased congestion, including the detrimental impact on road safety, health and the environment. In addition, the programme aims to provide measures to encourage increased use of sustainable travel options for the school journey, such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.

Where appropriate, the Safer Routes to School programme provides traffic management improvements outside schools, as well as curriculum based education and awareness resources, travel surveys, information leaflets, road safety training and initiatives, to encourage a modal shift away from the car, for the school run.

The table below includes the traffic management improvements which have been provided at schools within the North Down constituency:

School Name	Address	Measures Provided
Glengola Collegiate School	Bloomfield Road, Bangor	Flashing school signs
Redburn Primary School	Old Holywood Road, Holywood	Flashing school signs
St Comgalls Primary School	Brunswick Road, Bangor	Flashing school signs
Sullivan Upper School	Belfast Road and Abbey Road, Holywood	Flashing school signs
St Malachy's Primary School	Clandeboyne Road, Bangor	Flashing school signs
Clandeboyne Primary School	Clandeboyne Road, Bangor	Flashing school signs

Knockmore Railway Line

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development how much money was spent maintaining the Knockmore railway line in 2008. (AQW 5850/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have advised me that the running cost of maintaining the Knockmore railway line in 2008 was €91,610, including gross depreciation of £54,477.

Knockmore Railway Line

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide the (i) total number and (ii) types of trains that used the Knockmore railway line in 2008. (AQW 5852/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have advised me that during the calendar year 2008 a total of two trains used the Knockmore railway line. Details are:

- Train 1 September 2008, MRSI Charter, Class 80, Lisburn-Antrim return;
- Train 2 December 2008, ballast train, GM 112 and wagons.

Reducing Stress in the Workplace

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development given that stress is the primary reason for absence from work, what action he intends to take to improve motivation and morale and reduce stress in the workplace. (AQW 5953/09)

Minister for Regional Development: DRD already has in place a number of support mechanisms and initiatives, some of which are operated across all Departments, to improve staff motivation, morale and help reduce stress in the workplace. These include:

- Our Stress Management Policy, under which staff and line managers are given advice and guidance to help them recognise the symptoms of stress and how this condition can be managed;
- Attendance management procedures which fast-track stress-related absence cases to the Occupational Health Service to provide specific advice and information to the members of staff involved;
- Our Dignity at Work and Health and Safety policies, which provide staff with the means to tackle unacceptable behaviour and ensure healthy working practices;
- Work/Life Balance arrangements, including part-time working, job-sharing, flexible working hours, maternity and paternity leave, career break facilities and a Departmental Teleworking scheme, all of which are available to assist staff to manage their work and domestic responsibilities;
- Ongoing health checks, organised in conjunction with the Occupational Health Service, are offered to all staff;
- Regular Health Promotion events which focus on a number of health-related issues, including the recognition, control and relief of stress;
- We enable access by all staff to the Occupational Health Service and the Civil Service-wide Welfare Support Service; and
- We participate in the NI Civil Service Employee Assistance Programme, which provides a free, confidential 24-hour independent counselling service for all staff.

In addition to these measures, the Departmental Board initiated, in 2008, a “DRD Change and Improvement Programme” which focuses on improving corporate leadership and communications, enabling people, improving governance, and partnership working. The aim is to help develop capable, committed and confident staff to help the Department to deliver its services and to achieve its business objectives. The views of staff, assessed through focus groups, have helped to shape the programme. The improvements already achieved and those planned for the future in communications, leadership, training, financial management and partnership working are expected to make a major contribution towards improving staff morale and motivation.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development at what stage is the review of pay and grading for employees of Northern Ireland Water. (AQW 5959/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the review of pay and grading is subject to ongoing negotiations with the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA). While many issues have been agreed with the trade union, some relating to implementation and assimilation arrangements remain to be resolved. During December 2008, NIW employees were provided with details of the proposed pay structures and pay progression arrangements which had been agreed with NIPSA.

Transferring Budgets

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development if it is possible to transfer monies from one section of his Department to another, at the end of each financial year. (AQW 5970/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The February Monitoring Round is the last opportunity for the Department to seek Executive approval to transfer budgets from one business area to another.

Roads Service and Northern Ireland Water

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail all work being carried out by the Roads Service and NI Water in the South Antrim constituency in March 2009. (AQW 5983/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that in addition to the ongoing M2 Improvements Scheme, between Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions, the following work will be undertaken in the South Antrim Constituency during March 2009:

- work to assist right turns - Antrim Road, between Sandyknowes and Chimney Corner Hotel;
- replacement of traffic signs - Sandyknowes Junction;
- carriageway resurfacing – Kilbride Road, Doagh;
- add Remote Monitoring Systems to three pelican crossings – Main Street, Ballyclare and Ballyclare Square East and West;
- planned works in relation to Ballyclare Environmental Improvement Scheme;
- carriageway resurfacing - A2 Larne Road, Eden Village;
- carriageway resurfacing - A2 Larne Road, Tongue Lonan Road and Rawbrae Road;
- upgrade of storm water drainage system - Straid Village;
- provision of new storm water drainage - Dalways Bawn, Ballycarry;
- provision of road humps - Hawthorne Road, Newtownabbey;
- new footway (including new storm sewer and watermain on behalf of NI Water)- Park Road, Mallusk;
- carriageway resurfacing - Roguery Road, between its junction with Ballydonnelly Road and 156 Roguery Road;
- carriageway resurfacing - Coolsythe Road, between Portglenone Road and Ahoghill Road;
- carriageway resurfacing - Rickamore Brae, between Ballyrobin Road and Rickamore Road Upper;
- footway and carriageway resurfacing - Castleton, Templepatrick;
- carriageway resurfacing - Ballyquillan Road;
- improvements to the bus stop and associated footway links - junction of Ballyquillan Road and Diamond Road.

Routine maintenance work, which will also be carried out on roads in the South Antrim constituency during March 2009, includes:

- gully and manhole cleaning;
- sweeping and litter picking; and
- emergency telephone and communication cabinet cleaning.
- Northern Ireland Water has advised of the following work to be carried out in the South Antrim constituency during March 2009.
- replacement watermain- Birchill Road, Antrim;
- rehabilitation work - Rashee Service Reservoir;
- enhanced security and telemetry work – reservoirs at Newtownabbey and Antrim;
- replacement of joints - Hydepark Service Reservoir;
- rehabilitation work - Ballyvaston Service Reservoir;
- foul sewer upgrade - Aldergrove Sewerage Scheme, Antrim Road;
- installation of storm tank - Roughfort Waste Water Treatment Works;
- upgrade of existing works Milltown Waste Water Treatment Works, Antrim; and
- installation of gravity sewer, pumping main and two pumping stations - Creevery Sewerage Scheme Phase II.

These are in addition to the day-to-day maintenance and repair work required to the water and sewage network.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answers to AQW 914/09 and AQW 2039/09, in relation to the review of pay and grading arrangements for employees of Northern Ireland Water, (i) has this process been completed; (ii) if Northern Ireland Water and the unions have resolved all issues; and (iii) if employees have to make decisions about their pensions without knowing if a deal has been agreed between Northern Ireland Water and the unions (AQW 6030/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the review of pay and grading is subject to ongoing negotiations with the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA). While many issues have been agreed with the trade union, some relating to implementation and assimilation arrangements are yet to be resolved.

Employees were provided with details of the proposed pay structures and pay progression arrangements during December 2008 and NIW is satisfied that this provided sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision about their pensions before the 3 February 2009 deadline for the pensions option exercise.

Road Maintenance

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on road maintenance (i) in total; and (ii) by mile, for each class of road, in the North Antrim constituency, over the past three years. (AQW 6041/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain the information requested on a constituency basis. I can also advise that Roads Service's expenditure is not recorded by class of road.

However, Roads Service does record the actual spend during the preceding financial year, and a breakdown of the number of miles of road managed, for each Council area.

The total amount spent by Roads Service across the North, on structural maintenance, in each of the last three years, is as follows:-

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
£70.5 million	£65.6 million	£77.3 million

Structural maintenance includes resurfacing, strengthening, surface dressing, patching and structural drainage.

The table below provides details of spend on structural maintenance, together with the number of miles managed, and the approximate spend per mile that this equates to, for the Councils in the North Antrim Constituency, in each of the last three years.

District	Road Length (miles)*	Spend 05-06		Spend 06-07		Spend 07-08	
		£	£/mile**	£	£/mile**	£	£/mile**
Ballymena	617	3,354,000	5,000	2,471,000	4,000	2,749,000	4,000
Ballymoney	349	1,527,000	4,000	1,433,000	4,000	1,648,000	5,000
Moyle	325	1,301,000	4,000	1,187,000	4,000	1,340,000	4,000

* Road lengths are route miles as at 1 April 2007 and exclude motorway slip roads.

** Figures of £/mile have been rounded to nearest £k.

Footpath Provision

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what criteria is applied by Roads Service for footpath provision in proposed residential developments for which planning approval is sought. (AQW 6067/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is consulted by Planning Service to provide advice on roads matters for housing development proposals, including with regard to the provision of footpaths within any such proposal.

Proposals are considered against the joint DOE/DRD planning guide, 'Creating Places'. This incorporates guidance on layout and access for residential developments. Roads Service would normally stipulate that footpaths should be provided along both sides of a carriageway, except where development is only on one side of the carriageway. However, footways may be omitted to create a shared surface, where development is on both sides of a carriageway and the carriageway serves no more than approximately 25 dwellings.

Welcome Signs to Villages

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what rules apply for the erection of welcome signs to villages by community groups. (AQW 6070/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has an agreed policy in place with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the local Councils, to cover the provision of town and village welcome signs. This policy permits the erection of welcome signs, other than the standard black on white plates, providing that certain conditions are met, including that:

- the sign design must comply with that currently authorised by my Department;
- the content of the sign must be agreed with the local Council;
- the sign should generally be erected on the main approaches to the town or village, in the vicinity of existing 30mph or 40mph limit signs; and
- the promoter should pay for the signs.

Fuel Efficiency of New Buses

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the fuel efficiency of new buses operated by Translink. (AQW 6076/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has informed me that, although recently purchased buses produce fewer emissions, they are less fuel efficient than traditional vehicles. This reduction in fuel efficiency is in part due to the extra weight associated with making new buses accessible to people with disabilities and improving passenger comfort and safety.

However, it is likely that fuel efficiency of new buses will improve with the introduction of more sophisticated electronic control of engines and transmissions.

Translink continues to examine ways of improving fuel consumption through initiatives such as automatic gear change programmes and idle-shut down devices.

Site Meeting at the Hillhead Road, Newry

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development on what date did he attend a site meeting at the Hillhead Road, Newry. (AQW 6084/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The Member will be aware I met on site with him, Mr Michael Brady MLA and a number of local residents on 9 July 2007, to discuss the on-going closure of the Hillhead Road, Newry.

Road Maintenance

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total amount spent on Road Structural Maintenance for the years (i) 2002-03; (ii) 2003-04; (iii) 2004-05; (iv) 2005-06; (v) 2006-07; (vi) 2007-08; and (vii) 2008-09. (AQW 6103/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Departments Roads Service has advised that the total spend on structural maintenance over the years 2002/2003–2008/2009 is as follows:-

2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
£67.1 million	£82.8 million	£73.8 million	£70.5 million	£65.6 million	£77.3 million	£59 million*

* figure is estimated end of year spend.

Structural maintenance includes resurfacing, strengthening, surface dressing, patching and structural drainage.

Translink

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 5708/09, to extend the purchase of return tickets to Half Price Smart Pass holders on all Translink services. (AQW 6119/09)

Minister for Regional Development: From 1 April 2009, half fare SmartPass holders will be able to purchase return tickets for rail travel. This facility is being introduced to remove the need for pass holders to make two separate visits to the ticket office for each leg of their journey. On bus journeys, passengers must pass the driver as they board the vehicle and I do not consider that any real benefit would be achieved by having return tickets made available. As such, there are no plans to change the current arrangements for buying half fare bus tickets.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development for a list of traffic calming measures in Upper Bann. (AQW 6147/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I understand the Upper Bann constituency covers areas from both Craigavon and Banbridge Councils. My Department's Roads Service has advised that during the last four financial years there have been 34 traffic calming schemes, as well as 17 school travel and safety projects, implemented within these Council areas.

The tables below provide details of the traffic calming schemes and the school travel and safety projects in Upper Bann:

TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEMES

Council area	Year	Location	Features
Craigavon	2005/06	Ashgrove Road, Portadown	Traffic islands, central hatching and gateway feature
		Sloan St, Lurgan	Traffic islands, right-turn lanes and central hatching
		Hill St, Lurgan	Road markings and sheltered parking
		Gilford Rd, Portadown	Junction improvements and right-turn markings
		Churchill / Woodside estate, Portadown	Speed ramps
		Scotch Street	Gateway features, central hatching, right-turn lanes and road markings
		Lake Street, Lurgan	Gateway feature, central hatching, pedestrian islands and mini-roundabouts
	2006/07	Dumnacanvey village	Gateway features and road markings
		Meadowbrook estate, Craigavon	Speed ramps and tables
		Waringstown	Gateway features, build-outs and sheltered parking
	2007/08	Kernan Rd, Portadown	Gateway and central hatching
		Gibsons Hill	Gateways and central hatching
		Mourne Rd, Lurgan	Speed ramps
Tullygally Road, Craigavon		Traffic islands and central hatching	
Craigavon	2008/09	Brownlow Road, Craigavon	Traffic islands and central hatching
		Bachelors Walk, Portadown	Road humps and speed cushions
		Cecil Street Area, Portadown	Road humps

Council area	Year	Location	Features
Banbridge	2005/06	Hillsborough Rd, Dromore	Gateway features, central hatching, right-turn lanes and road markings
		Gallows St (upper) & Jubilee Rd, Dromore	Gateway features, kerb build-outs and road markings
		Meeting St, Dromore	New signs, anti-skid surfacing and sheltered parking
		Huntly Rd, Banbridge	Central hatching, traffic islands, right-turning lanes and mini-roundabout
		Peggy's Loanin, Banbridge	Central hatching and right-turn lanes
		Newry Rd, Banbridge	Sheltered parking, central hatching and pedestrian islands
	2006/07	Moneyslane village	Gateway features and road markings
		Scarva St, Banbridge	Kerb build-outs, sheltered parking and road markings
		Lawrencetown village	Gateway features, road markings and short length of footpath
	2007/08	Fort St, Banbridge	Gateway, central hatching, traffic islands, mini-roundabout and speed ramps
		Hilltown Rd, Rathfriland	Gateway and traffic island
		Castleview, Gilford	Speed ramps
		Waringsford Village	Mini-roundabout and gateway features.
	2008/09	Commercial Road Banbridge	Road hump, speed cushions, build-outs, sheltered parking and central hatching.
		Dromore St/Rd, Banbridge	Traffic islands, build-outs, central hatching and gateway feature.
		Pound Hill/Diamond Road, Dromore	Road humps, speed table and gateway feature.
Donard View, Loughbrickland		Speed cushions and road humps	

SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL SCHEMES

Council area	Year	Location	Features
Craigavon	2005/06	Bocombra Primary School, Portadown	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2005/06	Richmount Primary School, Scotch Street, Portadown	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2006/07	King's Park Primary School, Lurgan	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2006/07	St. Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	St. Mary's Primary School, Derrytrasna	Flashing signs, enhanced road markings, footway and site line improvements
	2007/08	St. Mary's Primary School, Gawley's Gate	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	St. Francis Primary School, Lurgan	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	St. Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2008/09	Brownlow Integrated College, Craigavon	School safety zone including flashing signs, enhanced road markings, road humps, priority build out and pedestrian islands

Council area	Year	Location	Features
Banbridge	2005/06	Moyallon Primary School, Portadown	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2006/07	Bridge Integrated Primary School, Banbridge	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2006/07	Ballydown Primary School, Banbridge	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	St. Colman's Primary School, Lawrencetown	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	St. Colman's Primary School, Annaclone	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2007/08	Bronte Primary School, Banbridge	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings
	2008/09	Rathfriland High School, Rathfriland	Flashing signs and enhanced road markings

Northern Ireland Water

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what problems have been encountered in agreeing the pay and grading system for Northern Ireland Water that was due to be completed by the end of November 2008; and if he is aware that employees have had to take other decisions about pensions without having this resolved. (AQW 6188/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the review of pay and grading is subject to ongoing negotiations with the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA). While many issues have been agreed with the trade union, some relating to implementation and assimilation arrangements are yet to be resolved.

Employees were provided with details of the proposed pay structures and pay progression arrangements during December 2008 and NIW is satisfied that this provided sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision about their pensions before the 3 February 2009 deadline for the pensions option exercise.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to explain the comment from Northern Ireland Water that it 'invests £1m every working day'; including where this money goes; and what benefits are received by the consumer. (AQW 6268/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that its current Strategic Business Plan includes £667 million for capital works investment across the three years to 2010 which equates to around £1 million per working day. This major investment is aimed at improving the water and sewerage infrastructure to achieve compliance with European Union water quality and environmental standards and will provide maximum benefit for customers including enhanced drinking water quality, improved delivery of services, greater protection of the environment and public health.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what proposals or plans develop or dispose of existing or new sites for NI Water; (ii) to detail any construction projects planned to be underway for NI Water for each of the next 3 years broken down by year; and (ii) to outline how any such estate development strategy complies with the Bain report proposals on the location of public sector employment. (AQW 6310/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has no proposals to develop any of its sites for office accommodation and therefore has no construction projects planned during the next three years for this purpose. It plans to dispose of approximately 118 sites identified as no longer required, including pieces of land, former works and pumping stations and a former depot.

The detailed suggestions contained in the Bain report on the review of policy on the location of public sector jobs are subject to careful examination and consideration by the Executive before decisions will be taken on a way forward. NIW has no objection to the principle of relocation provided it is based on sound business needs and offers best value for money.

Departmental Accounts

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to outline the process by which his Department's accounts are audited; (ii) who audits his Department's accounts; and (iii) to detail his Department's final audited accounts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 6348/09)

Minister for Regional Development:

- (i) DRD's Resource Accounts are audited under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, and in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards, as issued by the Auditing Practices Board.
- (ii) The accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), and his staff in the Northern Ireland Audit Office.
- (iii) The Departments final audited accounts have been published and are available in the Assembly Library. They can also be accessed from the DRD website.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Capital Infrastructure Projects

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to capital infrastructure projects in the East Londonderry constituency, (i) to list all these projects; and (ii) to breakdown the aggregated value of each project that is (a) under construction; (ii) in the procurement process; or (iii) to be advertised, in financial year 2009/2010. (AQW 6208/09)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): The information on capital infrastructure projects in my Department relevant to the Member's East Londonderry constituency is set out in the table below.

Project name	Status : under construction / to be procured or to be advertised	Value £m
Greysteel Phase 2, Limavady	Under construction	1.2

The member may wish to note that the Public Realm scheme covering the pedestrianised town centre in Coleraine is scheduled to complete by the end of March 2009. The estimated total cost of this is £1.32m, with the DSD contribution being some £1.23m.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Shop

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission (i) from which local companies is merchandise purchased for the Assembly shop; (ii) in which constituency is each of these companies based; and (iii) what merchandise does the Assembly shop stock. (AQW 5958/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): The attached table sets out (i) local companies from which the Assembly purchase merchandise for the Assembly Gift Shop, (ii) the constituency in which each company is based and (iii) a list of merchandise which the Assembly Gift Shop stocks.

In addition to the attached list a number of local crafters from across Northern Ireland have been provided with the opportunity to promote their goods in the Assembly Gift Shop each month. For the purpose of the crafter initiative the Assembly do not purchase any merchandise from the local crafters.

From which local companies is merchandise purchased	Constituency companies based	What merchandise does the Assembly shop stock?
Belleek Pottery	Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Belleek China
Bog Standard	Belfast East	Candles/Soaps
Celebration Candles	Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Candles
Impress Business Gifts	North Antrim	Whiskey glasses/Folders
McCaw Allen	Upper Bann	Linen/Cups/Soaps
Riverside Cards	West Tyrone	Greeting Cards
The Postcard Company	West Tyrone	Greeting Cards
Tyrone Crystal	Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Crystal
Cornucopia4u	South Antrim	Jewellery
O'Donnell Press	South Antrim	Children's Books
Graces Irish Biscuits	Belfast East	Biscuits
NI Gifts	Belfast South	Postcards/Posters/Key-rings
Berryhill Merchants	Newry & Armagh	Sweets
Lighthouse Drawing Room	Belfast South	Christmas Cards
Simply Special	West Tyrone	Greeting Cards
Miniprint Printers	Belfast East	Puzzles/loopy key-rings/Highlighters/Golf Tees/Pens
J Dougherty & Sons	North Antrim	Tights
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society	Belfast South	Parliament Buildings Books
Boleynowe China	South Antrim	Stormont Thimbles/Butter dishes.

Art Owned by the Assembly

Mr D McNarry asked the Assembly Commission what is the (i) estimated value; and (ii) insured value of art owned by the Assembly that are not registered under the Government Art Collection. (AQW 5995/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson):

- (i) In August 2007, the Assembly Commission arranged to have a valuation of all artefacts, including artwork, belonging to the Northern Ireland Assembly carried out. A copy of the valuation is enclosed.
- (ii) The artefacts belonging to the Northern Ireland Assembly, including the artwork, are not currently insured. The Assembly previously took the decision not to insure these items and to carry the risk. The Assembly currently has several works of art on loan from the Government Art Collection however these are managed centrally through the Department of Finance and Personnel, DFP. In line with other Government Departments DFP do not carry commercial insurance, they carry the risk and indemnify themselves against possible claims.

Valuation at Current Auction Estimates

- 1 FRANK McKELVEY RHA**
Portrait of Rt Hon J M Andrews in uniform
signed lower right
oil on canvas
40in.x33in. 3,500-4,500
- 2 N BECHER**
Portrait of Lord Craigavon
signed lower right and dated 1932
oil on canvas
48in.x32in 10,000-15,000

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 3 | <p>HENRY W GATES
 Portrait of Sir Henry Wilson
 signed lower right
 oil on canvas
 30in.x23½in</p> | 4,000-5,000 |
| 4 | <p>HUGH G RIVIERE
 Portrait of John B Lonsdale, Lord Armaghdale
 signed top left and dated 1908
 oil on canvas
 42in.x33½in</p> | 6,000-8,000 |
| 5 | <p>CHARLES SNEED WILLIAMS
 Portrait of a Frederick Temple, Third Marquess of Dufferin and Ava,
 Speaker of the Senate of Northern Ireland 1921-1930 in a wig and gown,
 half length, seated on a chair.
 Crest in top right corner.
 oil on canvas
 51in.x39in</p> | 5,000-7,000 |
| 6 | <p>LYDIA DE BURGH
 Her Majesty the Queen
 Signed and dated lower left
 Oil on canvas
 27in.x23in</p> | 10,000-15,000 |
| 7 | <p>WILLIAM CONOR
 Sketch for the State Opening of Parliament
 signed top left and dated 1921
 oil on canvas
 24½in.x29½in</p> | 25,000-35,000 |
| 8 | <p>WILLIAM CONOR
 The State Opening of Parliament
 signed top left and dated 1931
 oil on canvas
 30in.x56in</p> | 50,000-70,000 |
| 9 | <p>PIETER VAN DER MEULEN
 William III, the Duke of Schomberg
 receiving the Pope's blessing
 oil on canvas (relined and restored)
 62in.x87in</p> | 100,000-200,000 |
| 10 | <p>JOSEPH TUDOR
 The Obelisk on the Boyne
 signed
 oil on canvas
 40in.x50in</p> | 300,000-400,000 |

Remaining pictures, prints and photographs including;

A colour print of 'View of Sydenham, Belmont and Glen-Machan'
painted by Conor
26in.x39½in.

A print showing service for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, seated in robes
signed lower right and dated June 22 1897
11½in.x8in.

A Photograph of Queen Victoria

A print of the Irish House of Commons

	signed Henry Birraud lower left, in pencil 37½in.x36in.	
	A large framed display of historic parliamentary occasions 1945	
	A Collection of framed photographs of former speakers of the NI House of Commons	
	Framed sealed indenture of the Stormont Estate	
	A Collection of miscellaneous photographs of Parliament Buildings and historic events	1,000
11	RITA DUFFY Portrait of Mr Seamus Mallon MP standing wearing a suit beside a plaque to Ian Boroihme at Clontarf signed lower right 2003 58in.x41in	10,000-15,000
12	NOEL MURPHY The Assembly in Session signed lower right oil on canvas 54in.x96in	40,000-60,000
13	NOEL MURPHY The House Will Divide pencil drawing signed lower left and dated 2002 18 ½ in.x 27in	3,000-5,000
14	CAROL GRAHAM Portrait of Lord Alderdice standing wearing a suit in the chamber signed lower left and dated 2005 63in.x45in	2,000-2,500
15	ROWEL FRIERS 46 drawings + prints of members of the Northern Ireland Parliament 1972 inscribed 8in.x6in	4,000-6,000
	CLOTHING	
16	The Speakers state robes, applications on edges guilt black (fire damage) and speakers full bottomed wig in carry case and collection of clerks uniforms and wigs	5,000-7,000
17	Black Rod's uniform and painted ceremonial sword, scabbard and case. Case 34in. long	250-350
	MISCELLANEOUS	
18	An EIIR Coronation decagonal tapering vase presented to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Decorated with the Queen's beasts Made by British Potters	40,000-50,000
19	A Japanese officer's sword presented by Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia 41in. long	1,500-2,000
20	Kridah Kobah A bust of Sir Frederick Temple bronze 18½in. high	2,000-4,000
21	A nineteenth century mahogany mantle clock 'Evill of Bath' with pierces sides and glazed back (severe damage to veneer) 16½in. high	3,500-4,500
22	A model of Thiepval Tower in wood, made by Major John Jordan, April 1961 23in. high	400-600

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 23 | A late nineteenth century bronze French mantle clock, with Celtic swordsman clock and ropework presented in 1923
31in. high | 800-1,000 |
| 24 | Two parcel guilt and sealing wax red leather dispatch boxes embossed with Royal Arms of Ulster
26in | 6,000-8,000 |
| 25 | A green leather dispatch box embossed with Royal Arms of Ulster and cipher of George V
26½in | 3,000-5,000 |
| 26 | The bell from 'HMS Ulster' on an oak stand, the anchor and wreath over a bell-shaped support on a strapped plinth
70in. wide | 1,000-1,500 |
| 27 | A pair of Victorian style yew and mahogany dining table, jardinières, the bowls on carved columns and spreading base. 'Mountjoy Labels'
40in. high | 7,000-10,000 |

SILVER

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 36 | Black Rod's Wand of Office; ebony with silver guilt mounts with rampant ceremonial lion and bulbous gold scrolling decoration
London 1923 A/S
37 ¼ in long
presented by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava,
First Speaker of the Senate in Northern Ireland | 8,000-10,000 |
| 37 | A pair of silver maces
London 1924
42in. long | 30,000-40,000 |

Hansard Reports

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission to list the members who have decided not to receive hard copy daily Hansard reports. (AQW 6001/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr P Butler): Please find attached a list of those Members who do not receive hard copies of the Hansard daily report.

List of MLAs who do not receive hard copy daily Hansard reports

- Ms M Anderson
- Mr D Bradley
- Mrs M Bradley
- Lord Browne
- Mr T Burns
- Mr D Burnside
- Mr F Cobain
- Mr J Craig
- Mr L Cree
- Mr J Donaldson
- Mr A Easton
- Mr T Elliott
- Dr S Farry
- Mrs C Hanna
- Mr W Irwin
- Mrs D Kelly
- Mr T Lunn

- Mr J McCallister
- Mr F McCann
- Mr R McCartney
- Mr B McCrea
- Mr I McCrea
- Dr W McCrea
- Dr A McDonnell
- Mr M McGuinness
- Mr G McHugh
- Mr D McKay
- Mr M McLaughlin
- Mr A McQuillan
- Mr A Maskey
- Mr J O'Dowd
- Mr I Paisley Jnr
- Ms D Purvis
- Ms S Ramsey
- Ms C Ruane
- Mr D Simpson
- Mr J Spratt
- Mr B Wilson
- Mr S Wilson

Hansard Reports

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission to list the members who have decided not to receive hard copies of the Bound volumes of Hansard. (AQW 6002/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr P Butler): Please find attached a list of those Members who do not receive the bound volumes of the Official Report (Hansard).

List of MLAs who do not receive Bound Volumes of the Official Report (Hansard)

- Ms M Anderson
- Lord Browne
- Mr G Campbell
- Mr F Cobain
- Mr T Elliott
- Mr T Gallagher
- Mr W Irwin
- Mrs D Kelly
- Mr J McCallister
- Mr F McCann
- Mr R McCartney
- Mr B McCrea
- Mr M McGuinness
- Mr D McKay
- Mr A Maskey
- Ms S Ramsey

- Mr G Robinson
- Ms C Ruane
- Mr S Wilson

Hard Copies of Hansard

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission how much on average is costs to provide each MLA with hard copies of Hansards, since devolution. (AQW 6004/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Moutray): Between 8th May 2007 and 24th February 2009 (date last invoiced to the Assembly Commission) the average cost of producing the official report for each MLA was £2.30.

There have been 125 days of production and in total 26,241 copies of the official report have been produced, of which 12,082 have been issued to MLAs.

Mobile Phone Providers

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to the answer to AQW 7591/08 if any other mobile phone providers have enhanced their network coverage in Parliament Buildings. (AQW 6049/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): Further to AQW 7591/09 discussions are ongoing with Orange to install a signal booster in Parliament Buildings. It is hoped that this work will take place within the next few months. Upon completion of this work there will be enhanced network coverage for Orange, O2 and Vodafone mobile phone users.

Fax Machines in Parliament Buildings

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission what the age is of the fax machines that are provided to MLAs in Parliament Buildings; and if they are all in operational order. (AQW 6217/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): The Assembly Commission has delegated responsibility for the provision and maintenance of fax machines to Building Management Branch (BMB) within Properties Directorate. BMB have confirmed that the age of the fax machines provided to MLA's varies from office to office ranging from new to over 3 years of age.

To the best of BMB's knowledge all of the fax machines provided to MLA's are fully operational. However, if MLA's are experiencing any problems with their fax machines BMB will arrange for them to be repaired or replaced if they contact the Helpdesk on 25999.

In addition to this the IS Office, through the centrally funded IT equipment allocation for MLAs, has supplied each MLA with an OKI C5550 Multifunction Printer which has fax capability. These printers are based mainly in Constituency Offices however each Party has been allocated a number of these printers for use in Parliament Buildings in the respective central Party Support offices. These printers were purchased in May 2007 and the fax facility is fully operational and configured where requested by the MLA. Information relating to the capabilities of these types of printers, including the fax facility, was issued to all MLAs prior to the ICT refresh.

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 20 March 2009

Revised Written Answers to Questions

Written Answer Booklet of 13 March 2009

(Volume 39, No WA1)

In page WA3, replace the answer to question (AQW 5476/09) with;

Table A provides the classified advertising expenditure, broken down by individual newspaper, of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for financial years 05/06, 06/07, 07/08 and this year to date.

The Department did not carry out campaign advertising during this period.

TABLE A

Newspaper Group	Title	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 Year to Date
Alpha Newspaper Group	Ballymena Guardian	£166.26	-	-	-
	Coleraine Chronicle	£332.50	-	-	-
	East Antrim Gazette	£152.69	-	-	-
	Northern Constitution	£332.52	-	-	-
	Strabane Weekly News	£117.05	-	-	-
	The Leader	£166.26	-	-	-
	The Outlook	£305.68	-	-	-
	Tyrone Constitution	£234.10	-	£95.26	-
	Tyrone Courier	£152.68	-	-	-
	Ulster Gazette	£152.68	-	-	-
Alpha Newspaper Group Total		£2,112.42	£0.00	£95.26	£0.00
Independent News and Media	Belfast Telegraph	£19,918.78	£19,933.57	£14,656.04	£7,600.66
	Community Telegraph	£599.54	-	-	-
Independent News and Media Group Total		£20,518.32	£19,933.57	£14,656.04	£7,600.66

Newspaper Group	Title	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 Year to Date
Johnston Publishing	Ballymena Times	£195.10	-	-	-
	Belfast News	£329.12	-	-	£2,015.00
	Coleraine Times	£203.58	-	-	-
	Derry Journal	£186.61	£1,548.94	£1,153.27	-
	Dromore Leader	£373.22	-	-	-
	Lisburn Star	-	£180.60	-	-
	Londonderry Sentinel	-	£1,177.12	£1,219.09	-
	Lurgan Mail	£190.00	-	-	-
	Mid Ulster Mail	£519.12	-	-	-
	News Letter	£11,365.98	£11,836.06	£5,446.60	£2,562.99
	Newtownabbey Times	£195.10	-	-	-
	Portadown Times	£196.79	-	-	-
	Roe Valley Sentinel	£195.09	-	-	-
	Tyrone Times	£315.54	-	-	-
	Ulster Star	£222.24	-	-	-
Johnston Publishing Group Total		£14,487.49	£14,742.72	£7,818.96	£4,577.99
North West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Company	Fermanagh Herald	£152.68	-	£130.50	-
	Strabane Chronicle	£305.36	-	-	-
	Ulster Herald	£305.36	-	£130.50	-
North West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Company Group Total		£763.40	£0.00	£261.00	£0.00
Observer Group	Armagh Observer	£305.37	-	-	-
	Ballymena Chronicle	£101.79	-	-	-
	Dungannon Observer	£203.58	-	-	-
	Fermanagh News	£101.79	-	-	-
	Lurgan and Portadown Examiner	£101.79	-	-	-
	Mid Ulster Observer	£305.37	-	-	-
	The Democrat	£101.79	-	-	-
Observer Group Total		£1,221.48	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Spectator Group	Co Down Spectator	£176.43	-	-	-
	Newtownards Chronicle	£176.43	-	-	-
Spectator Group Total		£352.86	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Thomas Crosbie Holdings	Down Democrat	£95.00	-	-	-
	Newry Democrat	£95.00	-	£91.35	-
Thomas Crosbie Holdings Group Total		£190.00	£0.00	£91.35	£0.00
Belfast Media Group	Andersonstown News	£424.12	£180.60	-	-

Newspaper Group	Title	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 Year to Date
Irish News Group	Irish News	£9,429.24	£7,287.15	£4,601.61	£3,801.96
Independent Title	Irish Independent	-	£2,193.21	£3,903.23	-
Independent Title	Irish Times	£2,628.62	£12,319.24	£3,621.85	£5,850.00
Independent Title	Banbridge Chronicle	£373.90	-	-	-
Independent Title	Crossmaglen Examiner	£60.20	-	-	-
Independent Title	Derry News	£149.29	£267.96	-	-
Independent Title	Down Recorder	£169.65	-	-	-
Independent Title	Impartial Reporter	£132.32	-	£117.45	-
Independent Title	Mourne Observer	£325.72	-	-	-
Independent Title	Newry Reporter	£162.86	-	£138.33	-
	Total	£53,501.89	£56,924.45	£35,305.08	£21,830.61

Advertising expenditure for the Department's Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) is not readily available by individual newspaper.

Table B provides the total advertising expenditure by NDPBs for financial years 05/06, 06/07, 07/08 and 08/09 to date.

TABLE B

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 7,381.94
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company Limited	Not available	£ 4,940.63	£ 23,909.64	£ 19,844.26
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People	Not available	£ 6,831.06	£ 12,913.00	£ 18,980.41
Planning Appeals Commission & Water Appeals Commission	£ 121,236.04	£ 108,638.52	£ 49,898.57	£ 57,288.56
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	£ 55,876.12	£ 69,864.58	£ 56,805.12	£ 45,706.79
Strategic Investment Board	Not available	£ 35,500.00	£ 87,172.89	£ 39,563.01
Total	£ 177,112.16	£ 225,774.79	£ 230,699.22	£ 188,764.97

Written Answer Booklet of 13 March 2009

(Volume 39, No WA1)

In page WA8, replace the answer to question (AQO 2122/09) with;

We unreservedly condemn the recent attack on the Bangladeshi student, Sazzadur Rahman, on the evening of Friday 6 February in the Donegall Road area of South Belfast.

Foreign students, like migrant workers, are a valuable resource both to our society and for our economy. We understand that local community representatives and the PSNI's Minority Liaison Officer have been in contact with Mr Rahman to offer him advice and support.

We note the latest figures provided by the PSNI which indicate that there has been a reduction in racist crime and racist incidents in the South Belfast area. Over the period 1 April 2008 – 1 November 2008, there were 81 racist incidents and 61 racist crimes, compared to 117 racist incidents and 79 racist crimes over the same period the previous year. This reflects some of the very positive work which has been carried out by Government, the PSNI and community workers in the area.

We will continue to support preventative measures and capacity building of many local community groups, including those within the South Belfast area, through our Minority Ethnic Development Fund. To this end, and as part of our ongoing work to combat racism and to promote good relations, we recently launched our Minority Ethnic Development Fund for the incoming financial year.

The £1 million we have allocated this year represents a substantial increase on the previous annual spend prior to the restoration of devolution. This is clear evidence of our commitment to good relations and good race relations. Whilst we clearly cannot prevent all racial incidents and crimes, we are determined to do what we can to both prevent them occurring and to support those who are victims.

Written Answer Booklet of 23 January 2009

(Volume 36, No WA6)

In page WA367, replace the answer to question (AQW 4015/09) with;

The proposed DARD Direct office locations have been selected on the basis of accessibility for customers and staff, minimizing disruption for customers and staff, size of farming sector and potential for animal disease outbreaks in office catchment areas, geographic features, potential availability of suitable accommodation and budgetary considerations. Constituency boundaries did not form part of these criteria.

While there is no DARD Direct office proposed for location in the Upper Bann constituency, almost the entire area is within a 16 miles radius of either the proposed Dungannon, Armagh or Newry offices.

Written Answer Booklet of 23 January 2009

(Volume 36, No WA6)

In page WA380, replace the answer to question (AQW 3896/09) with;

Tá curtha in iúl ag Príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt dom gur mar seo a leanas líon na bpáistí atá ag freastal ar scoileanna i dtoghcheantar Aontroim Thoir atá ag fanacht le síceolaí oideachais a fheiceáil laistigh de na hamscálaí a iarradh:-

I have been advised by the Chief Executive of the North-Eastern Education and Library Board that the number of children attending schools in East Antrim who are waiting to see an educational psychologist in the timescales requested is as follows:-

Waiting for up to one year	Waiting for up to two years	Waiting for up to three years	Waiting for over three years
137	26	9	2

These figures include Stage 3 assessments and reviews, Stage 4 assessments, Stage 5 reviews, special testing and examination arrangements and assessments of pre-school children who are attending a nursery school or class, as outlined in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP).

Written Answer Booklet of 13 February 2009

(Volume 37, No WA3)

In page WA255, replace the answer to question (AQW 4863/09) with;

Invest NI's role is to promote "Northern Ireland" as an attractive and viable location for new inward investment opportunities.

Invest NI promotes all constituencies to potential investors on an impartial basis. Invest NI does not determine locations for visits for a potential investor and the final location for investment; this decision is taken by the investor.

In the last 12 months, Invest NI facilitated 153 visits made by 126 companies. These potential investors visited the following constituencies during their stay in Northern Ireland:

Constituency	No. of Visits
Belfast North	10
Belfast East	89
Belfast South	95
Belfast West	13
East Antrim	5
Mid Ulster	3
North Down	44
South Antrim	14
Foyle	7
Lagan Valley	43
Newry and Armagh	4
Upper Bann	6
West Tyrone	3
Strangford	1

Constituency	No. of Visits
East Londonderry	2
South Down	1

Invest NI, and its predecessor legacy bodies, has always used the ‘jobs promoted’ rather than ‘jobs created’ measure as the jobs are actually created by the company undertaking the investment, not Invest NI. It is also the case that investments often need three or more years for the company’s plans to be put fully into effect, with the jobs being created over this extended timeline. It follows, therefore, that it is not appropriate to seek to link visits by potential investors to offers made and jobs promoted, particularly over such a short timeframe.

However, the table below details a list of projects and jobs promoted in approved Invest NI offers to inward investors over the time period of the visits requested (1 February 2008 to 31 January 2009).

Invest NI Jobs Promoted / Safeguarded by Approved Inward Investment Offers by Parliament Constituency (1 Feb 08 to 31 Jan 09):

Parliamentary Constituency	Total		
	No of Projects	New jobs	Safe Jobs
Belfast East	7	132	1,883
Belfast North	1	1	0
Belfast South	10	1,248	7
Belfast West	2	13	29
East Antrim	2	237	0
East Londonderry	2	34	30
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4	93	0
Foyle	1	120	0
Newry And Armagh	2	17	0
North Down	2	773	152
South Antrim	1	100	0
South Down	1	511	0
Strangford	2	17	0
West Tyrone	2	122	0
Not Yet Determined	1	67	2
Grand Total	40	3,485	2,103

Notes:

1. Figures for 2008/09 are provisional and may be subject to amendment
2. Inward Investment refers to investment by overseas owned clients, including GB owned clients.
3. New Jobs represents the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
4. Safe Jobs represents the number of jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.
5. Some projects offered assistance may not proceed as planned.

Written Answer Booklet of 9 January 2009

(Volume 36, No WA4)

In page WA306, replace the answer to question (AQW 3306/09) with;

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.

NUMBER OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS MADE AT SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE LEVEL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Internal	4	3	NIL	1	2
External	23	11	18	18	6

Written Answer Booklet of 16 January 2009

(Volume 36, No WA5)

In page WA351, replace the answer to question (AQW 3401/09) with;

As of 30 September 2008, there were 317 residential care homes and 252 nursing homes in Northern Ireland, including 62 statutory residential homes owned by the HSC. Of these, the HSC is currently consulting on the future of the following 15 residential homes:

- **Northern HSC Trust** – Clonmore, Newtownabbey; Greenisland Residential Home; Lisgarel, Larne; Rosedale, Antrim; Rathmoyle, Ballycastle
- **Southern HSC Trust** - Skeagh House, Dromore; Slieve Roe House, Kilkeel; Riverside, Gilford
- **Western HSC Trust** - Foyleville Home, Londonderry; Gortmore Home, Omagh; Greenfield Home, Strabane; Drumhaw Home, Lisnaskea;
- **South Eastern HSC Trust** - Loch Cuan House, Newtownards; Grove House, Ballynahinch; Ravara House, Bangor.

The Belfast Trust has indicated that it will be making proposals in respect of a number of homes in the future, but these have not as yet been identified. All such proposals will be subject to full public consultation.

The HSC also own 2 nursing homes. There are no proposals to close these facilities.

Written Answer Booklet of 23 October 2008

(Volume 34, No WA2)

In page WA174, replace the answer to question (AQW 1549/09) with;

My Department's Roads Service does not maintain a central register of the information that you have requested by council area. However, I am able to provide you with the expenditure on repairing defects, which include potholes, at Roads Service Divisional level. This is detailed at Table 1 below.

The compensation paid for damages to vehicles caused by potholes is detailed by Roads Service Section Office area (Table 2 below). The Section Office areas roughly correlate to District Council areas.

The Information provided in each table relates to each of the last 5 years.

TABLE 1

Roads Service	Expenditure £k1				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Northern Division	3757	4145	4399	4259	4731
Southern Division	4486	4634	4782	4953	5021
Eastern Division	3881	4434	4733	4985	5650
Western Division	5556	5435	5219	5256	5309

1. Recorded expenditure in relation to carriageway and footway patching repairs (all patching repairs)

TABLE 2

	2003/04 (£)	2004/05 (£)	2005/06 (£)	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)
Eastern Division					
Belfast North	1,663.99	1,361.28	521.80	539.59	138.06
Belfast South	1,544.22	2,641.13	198.41	437.76	673.60
Castlereagh	1,571.78	3,513.62	749.61	479.99	894.18
Lisburn	14,524.93	11,461.45	4,363.21	6,776.87	6,916.96
N'Abbey & Carrick	4,261.47	4,035.48	4,306.79	2,185.26	4,244.76
North Down	790.69	517.06	621.19	825.45	303.60
Northern Division					
Antrim	3,405.61	4,887.62	1,396.18	1,004.95	776.44
Ballymena & Larne	8,432.68	6,033.94	6,353.30	5,773.73	4,566.51
Ballymoney & Moyle	346.00	241.00	3,415.22	1,927.05	3,116.81
Coleraine	195.00	329.49	3,382.10	1,456.30	577.98
Limavady	768.00	523.00	35.50	238.52	796.39
Londonderry	3,164.21	3,378.93	1,439.04	1,341.95	3,098.30
Southern Division					
Ards	6,808.35	5,697.66	5,517.45	2,121.75	5,508.36
Armagh	1,720.31	2,195.13	3,943.29	2,441.60	4,055.05
Banbridge	4,265.14	2,768.57	2,416.91	2,920.42	1,851.74
Craigavon	4,528.09	4,034.56	960.61	2,848.24	3,705.89
Down	2,919.88	1,552.29	1,462.11	2,865.82	3,057.04
Newry & Mourne	21,353.03	16,642.38	13,312.41	12,150.83	17,907.47

	2003/04 (£)	2004/05 (£)	2005/06 (£)	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)
Strangford Ferry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Western Division					
Cookstown	5,241.49	1,112.32	1,920.00	2,095.19	4,501.47
Dungannon	4,176.01	2,104.58	5,553.79	3,492.83	3,771.05
Fermanagh	1,778.38	3,494.79	3,385.48	4,007.05	4,154.19
Magherafelt	3,294.93	1,421.62	1,618.89	563.63	1,785.40
Omagh	2,285.36	1,659.93	2,090.41	6,055.05	4,677.57
Strabane	355.50	503.16	205.00	633.21	866.74
Total	99,395.05	82,110.99	69,159.70	65,183.04	81,945.56

Written Answer Booklet of 13 February 2009

(Volume 37, No WA3)

In page WA293, replace the answer to question (AQW 4423/09) with:

The information requested is not available in the form requested. However the table below sets out the average year to date (April to December) clearance times for processing new claims to benefit from the date of their receipt by the Social Security Agency and in the case of Housing Benefit by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. I am unable to provide information on Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit as these are administered by HM Revenue and Customs.

	Target 2007/08 (Days)	Year to date performance at December 2007 (Days)	Target 2008/09 (Days)	Year to date performance at December 2008 (Days)
+ Jobseekers Allowance	12	8.8	12	11.3
+ Incapacity Benefit *	22	19.4	22	21.8
Employment and Support Allowance **	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	13.8
+ Attendance Allowance	45	28.1	40	29.8
+ Carers Allowance	35	26.2	30	22.3
+ Disability Living Allowance	50	45.0	47	40.9
+ Income Support	12	9.2	12	10.6
Housing Benefit ***	100%	94.3%	100%	82%
+ State Pension Credit	12	11.7	15	15.0

+ These benefits are administered by the Social Security Agency and all of these clearance times have been met within target in 2007-08 and in 2008-09 to date. This is despite a very significant increase in workloads across many of the SSA benefits. For example, Jobseekers Allowance new claims year to date are up 57% above forecast and State Pension Credit new claims year to date are up 51% above forecast. These workload increases have occurred in parallel with a major modernisation programme, including the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance being undertaken by the Agency.

* The Year to date performance reported covers the period 1 April to 31 October. Incapacity Benefit was replaced by Employment and Support Allowance for new claimants from 27 October 2008.

** Employment and Support Allowance was introduced on 27 October 2008 and a clearance time target has not yet been set.

*** Housing Benefit is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The target and performance for this benefit is expressed as the percentage of cases assessed within 14 days.

Written Answer Booklet of 27 February 2009

(Volume 38, No WA2)

In page WA216, replace the answer to question (AQW 5292/09) with;

The Social Security Agency provides a range of telephony and text phone services that use non-geographical numbers, these are included in the following table;

Service line	Tel number	Text Phone
Pension Service Enquiry Line	0845 6018821	
Pension Service Enquiry Line		0845 601 8841
Pension Service Enquiry Line		0808 100 2198
Pension Service Teleclaims	0808 100 2658	
Pension Service Teleclaims		0808 100 2198
Pension Service Application Line	0808 100 6165	
Compensation Recovery Unit	0845 3590017	
Debt Management Unit	0845 3580027	
Benefit Leaflet Information Service	0845 6052020	
Benefit Enquiry Line	0800 220674	
Benefit Enquiry Line		0800 243787
Benefit Fraud Hotline	0800 975 6050	
Social Fund Crisis Loans	0800 0288822	
Disability and Carers Service Text phone		0800 242787
N.I. Contributions Deficiency	0845 603332	
N.I. Contributions Deficiency		0845 602 1277
Employment Support Allowance Fresh Claims	0800 085 6318	
Employment Support Allowance Change of Circumstances	0845 602 7301	
Employment Support Allowance Text phone		0800 328 3419

BT does not charge customers for 0800 or 0808 numbers. Calls to 0845 numbers are now free to BT customers depending on their calling plan. For those customers not receiving free calls they will be charged an 8p set up charge and 1.96p per minute during the day and 0.49p per minute for evening calls.

Customers ringing from a non BT landline or mobile may be charged by their network provider for the connection onto the BT number.

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