
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 1 May 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

UK Government Command Paper

Mr D McNarry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in adopting the UK Government Command Paper 7424 - 'The Nation's Commitment: Cross Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans, July 2008'; whether OFMDFM is content to proceed with the intent expressed in the Command Paper; and what assessment it has made of how this issue is currently being addressed by Government Departments. (AQW 6416/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Command Paper 'The Nation's Commitment: Cross Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans' has been passed to us by the Ministry of Defence for consideration.

Commissioner for Older People

Mrs M Bradley asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what work has been done to put a permanent commissioner for older people in place. (AQW 6582/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: We would refer the Member to the answer given to her previous question on this issue (AQO 1658/09 12 January 2009).

In order to appoint a Commissioner for Older People we need to bring forward primary legislation. It is our intention to have this Bill introduced and passed within the lifetime of this current Assembly.

We would confirm that our officials are currently working on developing detailed policy proposals together with a draft Bill which we intend to issue for public consultation in autumn 2009.

In developing these proposals, our officials are currently considering the evidence base available. They continue to engage with interested stakeholders, including the Age sector representatives, the interim Advocate, Dame Joan Harbison, and others to ensure that there is the broadest possible involvement in the preparatory stages of the legislative and policy development process prior to further public consultation. As part of this process, Junior Minister Donaldson met with Ruth Marks, the Welsh Older People's Commissioner, in February of this year.

Lifetime Opportunities Strategy

Mr B Wilson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the 'Lifetime Opportunities' strategy that was ratified by the Executive in December 2008; and if and when an action plan will be published. (AQW 7083/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: In agreeing, on 20th November 2008, to formally adopt the broad architecture and principles of Lifetime Opportunities as the basis of its strategy to tackle poverty

and social exclusion and patterns of deprivation based on social need, the Executive further agreed to the establishment of an Executive Sub-Committee on poverty and social inclusion.

The first meeting of this Executive Sub-Committee took place on Thursday 26th March and we chaired this jointly. The aim of setting up this Committee was to try and achieve closer, more co-ordinated and more effective cross departmental working on anti-poverty issues. The Committee will focus not only on trying to lift those people out of poverty, but also to prevent more from falling into poverty. This is all the more critical now given the economic climate and the impact of that on employment.

On 26 March the Sub-Committee:

- considered its terms of reference;
- was informed as to the levels of poverty here and individuals, groups and areas at greatest risk; and
- considered and discussed initial proposals as to possible priority action areas.

Following those discussions we have now asked that officials liaise with colleagues in other departments and finalise a list of priority action areas for consideration and agreement at the Executive Sub-Committee's second meeting, which we intend to convene during May.

At this second meeting the Sub-Committee will also specifically consider proposals in respect of the monitoring and reporting frameworks that will be associated with the Lifetime Opportunities strategy.

2010 European Year Against Poverty

Mr B Wilson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the plans of the (i) EU unit; and (ii) Anti-Poverty Unit for the 2010 European Year Against Poverty. (AQW 7085/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive, through its recently published 'Priorities for European Engagement', has committed to participating in the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. OFMDFM's European Division is tasked with raising awareness of the Year among Northern Ireland Departments and will continue to disseminate all relevant information across departments on an ongoing basis.

An official from OFMDFM's Anti-Poverty Unit will represent the Executive on the National Implementation Body for the Year. Recently established by the Department for Work and Pensions, this Body will meet on 30 April for the first time to consider implementation options.

Child Poverty

Ms D Purvis asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what method is being used to measure the level and elements of severe child poverty, which the Executive has pledged to eradicate by 2012. (AQW 7092/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Work has been ongoing for some time to identify the most appropriate way to measure severe poverty. A paper for consideration by the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has been prepared and will shortly be circulated to Ministers. It proposes a measure based on a mixed income plus material deprivation definition that would produce a headline figure, which could be monitored over time, plus an acknowledgement that the most vulnerable groups need to be targeted. We are aiming to have this method agreed by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting.

Women Appointed to Public Office

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action it will take to ensure that more women are appointed to public office. (AQW 7139/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The overarching principle of the public appointment process is that selection is based on merit. We are committed to achieving greater diversity amongst public appointees provided that all action is consistent with the merit principle.

We are aware that some sections of our society are not applying in sufficient numbers and as a result are under-represented on the boards of public bodies, but we remain committed to encouraging greater participation from amongst these groups.

In an effort to encourage more people to apply, we have put a number of measures in place to raise awareness of public appointments and appointment opportunities. In this regard, OFMDFM works closely with other departments and:

- maintains a public appointments page on its website. This contains information on public appointment issues and includes details of current vacancies;
- maintains a mailing list of individuals and organisations interested in receiving information on public appointments. The mailing list is open to all and includes under-represented groups and organisations representing women;
- circulates on a regular basis to everyone on the mailing list information on forthcoming public appointment opportunities;
- published a practical guide to public appointments to help people engage with the process to the best of their abilities; and
- publishes a Public Appointments Annual Report.

Ultimately, diversity amongst public appointees depends upon the range and calibre of people willing to put themselves forward for consideration.

Victims and Survivors Strategy

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of the Victims and Survivors Strategy. (AQW 7140/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: It is our intention to finalise and publish the Strategic Approach for Victims and Survivors when the OFMDFM Committee has completed its consideration of the document.

The Committee has advised us that it will be in a position to give its views on the document when it has considered our detailed proposals for the proposed Victims and Survivors Service. These proposals were passed to the Committee on 23 April for consideration.

Victims and Survivors Organisations

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the funding arrangements for victims and survivors organisations. (AQW 7142/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Victims and Survivors Groups Core Funding and Development Grant Schemes, administered by the Community Relations Council (CRC) on behalf of OFMDFM, have been extended to 2009/10 with £2.75 million and £1.6 million being available respectively. It was agreed that the amounts available to groups under the core funding scheme will be increased by 10% in line with verified expenditure under the terms of the scheme.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr R Newton asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to planning appeals determined by the Planning Appeals Commission, how many (i) have been decided; (ii) were related to single dwellings in the countryside; and (iii) were related to single dwellings in the countryside and have been dealt with by informal hearing, in the last six months. (AQW 7189/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its independent tribunal status, its Chief Commissioner has been asked to provide a response directly to you, and we understand that she has written to you in the following terms:

“I have been asked to provide you with information requested in the above Assembly Question.

- (i) The Planning Appeals Commission issued 687 decisions in the 6 month period ending 31 March 2009, (ii) 474 of these decisions related to single dwellings in a rural area and (iii) of the 474 decisions that related to single dwellings in a rural area, 29 of these decisions were dealt with by the Informal Hearing Procedure.

I would be happy to provide any further information you require arising out of this response or to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuberculosis Cases in North Antrim

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to confirm her Department’s policy on restricting the number of tuberculosis cases in North Antrim. (AQW 7058/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): There is a key goal in the Programme for Government to reduce by 27% the incidence of TB in cattle in the north of Ireland by 2011. Actions to achieve the targeted reduction are based on the continuing implementation of the TB control programme.

The TB programme is based on the detection of diseased or high risk animals, the compulsory removal of these animals from their herd of origin to slaughter, and the restriction of movements of cattle from infected herds until they are tested clear. Generally, individual animals that test positive are removed rather than the whole herd.

My Department targets its TB control programme across the North, and there is no policy specific to North Antrim.

Tuberculosis Cases in North Antrim

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many confirmed cases of tuberculosis there have been in North Antrim, in each of the last three years. (AQW 7059/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Number of confirmed TB cases in the last 3 years:

Year	Total
2008	72
2007	58
2006	91

This represents cases that have been detected, in the Ballymena and Coleraine Divisions, at an official Tuberculosis test or meat inspection and had the disease confirmed by culture of the causal organism in the AFBI Laboratory.

Crossnacreevy Site

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has for the Crossnacreevy site. (AQW 7120/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: A business case which considers the possible relocation of the functions at the Crossnacreevy site is now with me. I will be taking my decision and informing the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and stakeholders of this in the near future.

Crossnacreevy Site

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is (i) the size; and (ii) the land valuation of the Crossnacreevy site. (AQW 7121/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Crossnacreevy site comprises 35 hectares.

In February 2008, the Department was advised that the potential realisable value of the Crossnacreevy site could be in the range of £2.28m to £5.78m, depending on the potential use of the land and buildings.

Using agricultural land values (2006: £24,870 per hectare) and the value of buildings as per the DARD asset register, the value of the site is £2.71m.

Crossnacreevy Site

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to explain why the report on the proposed sale of Crossnacreevy been delayed. (AQW 7122/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: A business case considering the possible relocation of the functions currently carried out at the Crossnacreevy site was to be completed within the period of the 2008/09 DARD Balanced Scorecard. This target was achieved. I am now considering that report.

Crossnacreevy Site

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the report on the proposed sale of Crossnacreevy will be published. (AQW 7123/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am considering a business case on the possible relocation of functions currently undertaken at Crossnacreevy. I envisage releasing the report to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and stakeholders in the near future.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail how much (i) bovine tuberculosis; and (ii) brucellosis cost her Department in the 2007/08 financial year. (AQW 7161/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: In 2007/08 the bovine tuberculosis programme cost the Department £21. 2m. In the same period, the brucellosis programme cost £13.9m.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many animals were slaughtered as a result of (i) bovine tuberculosis; and (ii) brucellosis, in each of the last three calendar years. (AQW 7163/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Number of Animals slaughtered as a result of Tuberculosis and Brucellosis during 2006 to 2008 is as follows:

	Tuberculosis	Brucellosis
2006	9922	4838
2007	7896	6214
2008	9359	4853

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) for her assessment of using a vaccine for cattle and badgers to eradicate bovine tuberculosis; and (ii) what plans she has to introduce a trial of the method of vaccinating badgers used by her counterpart in England. (AQW 7165/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- i. The use of a vaccine for cattle is not currently an option because the efficacy of any vaccine is not clear and it may interfere with the current diagnostic tests. My Department will continue to keep in contact with the work that is on-going in Britain to develop a cattle vaccine. As regards badgers, I recognise that badger vaccination may be the most feasible solution in the long-term in the eradication of bovine tuberculosis, but it could be some time before an effective vaccine becomes available.
- ii. Currently, I have no plans to introduce a trial similar to the Injectable Badger Vaccine Deployment Project in England. My Department will continue to keep in contact with the work that is on-going in Britain and in the South to develop a badger vaccine. We will continue to explore how best we can contribute to this work.

Bio-Security on Farms

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline what measures she has taken to encourage greater bio-security on farms. (AQW 7166/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I believe that the prevention of disease by the practice of good biosecurity is an essential component to promote a competitive industry; protect animal and public health; and safeguard the interests of all.

To this end, my Department has a long term commitment to promoting biosecurity messages in a timely manner and in response to heightened disease risk. This takes the form of leaflets, advertising, press articles, posters, DARD website updates, and meetings with farmers and with Private Veterinary Practitioners.

In 2004 the Department issued all livestock keepers with a copy of the 'Biosecurity Code for NI Farms', which also included guidance for official visitors and recreational users of farms. This is a voluntary code issued in conjunction with the north of Ireland industry. The booklet is also available on request or from the DARD website.

In addition, the new Diseases of Animals Bill, which will shortly move to Consideration Stage in the Assembly, includes a provision which will enable my Department to prepare and publish statutory biosecurity guidance for specific diseases, such as Foot and Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza, Tuberculosis and Brucellosis. The guidance will include advice on practical precautions which farmers can take to prevent the introduction of disease on to their premises and will set standards that everyone will have to comply with. The Department will work closely with stakeholders and the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee in producing the guidance.

Other initiatives include courses run at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, Greenmount which contain biosecurity input for the instruction of the next generation of farmers, and a Biosecurity module for farmers in their Lifelong Learning programme. The Focus Farms Scheme, funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme, promotes good practice and provides biosecurity training. Each focus farm is required to prepare a biosecurity plan to protect stock. This information is cascaded to farmers attending the focus farms and protective clothing and footwear, as well as disinfectant dips for cars and footwear is provided by the Focus Farmer.

Where there are specific disease outbreaks, for example in relation to Brucellosis (BR) or Tuberculosis (TB), information, including biosecurity advice, is provided directly to infected farms by Veterinary Service staff. A booklet 'TB in Your Herd', which includes biosecurity advice to reduce the risk of infection to cattle, is issued to all affected herds and is also available on the DARD website. Biosecurity is an important part of the Brucellosis Initiative. It has been discussed at farmers' meetings in high incidence Divisions and the Farmers' Liaison Groups set up following these meetings. In addition, an advice letter on biosecurity with regard to Brucellosis has been issued.

Biosecurity also includes the prudent sourcing of stock and associated on-farm quarantine. I have repeatedly stressed this message in relation to Bluetongue and have urged the farming community to enforce a voluntary ban on the import of animals from bluetongue affected areas.

Water Rights for Clay Lough

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the reasons for it taking so long to transfer the water rights for Clay Lough, Killyleagh. (AQW 7177/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The ownership of the water rights associated with complex transfers of land and property since the 19th Century is still under legal investigation. Transfers of water rights and access to these are a matter for private contractual arrangements and outside the drainage remit of the Rivers Agency, however I can assure the member that my department is doing everything in its power to expedite the matter.

Mussel Site in Belfast Lough

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) if her Department is aware that the mussel site in Belfast Lough is being illegally used by a Dutch boat; and (ii) what she is doing to license this site to those who have applied legally. (AQW 7241/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am aware of an incident regarding alleged illegal fishing activity in Belfast Lough. The matter is currently the subject of an ongoing investigation to establish the facts and to determine what further action may be taken. The Department's Fisheries Inspectorate continues to monitor fishing activity and there is no evidence to indicate there is ongoing illegal fishing activity taking place in the area in question.

As I have previously advised in my answer to AQW 6717/09, there are a number of outstanding aquaculture licence applications for sites in Belfast Lough, including that to which you refer which are affected by the current moratorium on the granting of any further licences for the bottom culture of mussels.

The moratorium was introduced because of concerns about the ability of local sea loughs to sustain what was a rapid development of the industry and about demand for mussel seed exceeding supply. Pending resolution of these issues, which will include the use of carrying capacity models which have been developed recently, the moratorium therefore remains in place.

Bee Strategy

Mr L Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide an update on her Department's bee strategy. (AQW 7349/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As indicated to you in February, I felt it would be appropriate to await the outcome of Defra's Bee Health Strategy. This Strategy has now been published and my Department has begun consideration of a Strategy for the north of Ireland. Engagement with stakeholders will follow in due course.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Ulster/Scots and Irish Language Funding

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what was the total amount of funding awarded by his Department for (i) Ulster/Scots and (ii) Irish language, in each of the last four years. (AQW 6736/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): The total amount of funding awarded by my Department and its Agencies for Ulster-Scots and Irish language projects is shown in the table below.

Year	Ulster-Scots	Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF)	Irish (excluding ILBF)
2008	£730,201.44	£3,000,000	£1,385,324.78
2007	£1,520,072.21	£3,000,000	£2,070,491.90
2006	£629,309.57	£3,000,000	£2,040,687.77
2005	£300,292.50	£3,000,000	£2,114,989.67

Developing Lough Neagh

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail his plans and proposals to develop Lough Neagh as a navigable, inland waterway and recreational facility as part of his Department's Corporate Plan 2008/11. (AQW 7216/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department has commissioned a Business Case to assess the viability of establishing a Navigation Authority for Lough Neagh and the Blackwater and Upper Bann Rivers and this is due to be submitted to the Department in May 2009.

I am not in a position to develop any plans or proposals for the development of Lough Neagh until this Business Case has been considered.

Developing Lough Neagh

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what investment and support has his Department put towards the development of Lough Neagh as a recreational angling and inland waterway resource, in the last five years. (AQW 7218/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department's only statutory remit regarding Lough Neagh is maintenance of the navigation channel and markers at the entrance to the Sixmilewater River. Despite this limited remit, my Department works in partnership with Local Authorities and others to help develop Lough Neagh's navigational and recreational potential.

Over the last 5 years my Department has grant aided the following projects:

- Refurbishing the Maid of Antrim passenger vessel: £67,110;
- Provision of a replacement bridge at Maghery Cut: £294,704;
- Development of Rams' Island Jetty and Ferry facility: £10,000;
- Ballyronan Marina watersports centre: £11,350.

Whilst DCAL would like to promote angling development on Lough Neagh, it is a private fishery and currently there is no resource allocated to assist with private fishery development.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Teacher's Retirement

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Education what steps she is taking to ensure that teachers will continue to be able to retire early without suffering financially as a result of the recent proposals to reduce their rights. (AQW 6916/09)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): The arrangements by which teachers are compensated for premature retirement are intended to provide a management tool which employing authorities can use to bring about a qualitative improvement in the educational provision in their schools. They allow teachers' employers to effect redundancies in the context of necessary organisational change and to retire teachers in the interests of the efficient discharge of the employer's function. They do not confer a right to early retirement on teachers. A separate provision was introduced in 2007 which allows a teacher aged 55 or over to retire before normal retirement age and receive actuarially reduced pension benefits.

My Department is currently consulting on draft regulations which will ensure that, in future, employers will meet the extra cost of teachers' premature retirement. However, employers will still have available to them all the options which previously existed to enable them to secure the early release of teachers where necessary. In addition, the new regulations will allow employers to make an enhanced severance payment as an alternative to granting premature retirement.

As siocair nach raibh ar na fostóirí foráil bhuiséid a dhéanamh do na costais seo san am atá thart, chuir mé £6m i 2009 agus £6m eile i 2010 i leataobh le cuidiú a thabhairt d'fhostóirí le hiomarcaíochtaí múinteoirí

a bhainistiú. Dá bhfágfaí na socruithe mar atá anois, bheadh méadú suntasach ar ranníocaíochtaí pinsin do mhúinteoirí de thoradh air. Bheadh tionchar aige seo ar sheirbhísí túslíne agus ar phá glan na múinteoirí ar fad.

Recognising that employers have not had to budget for these costs in the past, I have set aside £6m in 2009 and a further £6m in 2010 to help employers manage teacher redundancies. To leave arrangements as they are would lead inevitably to a significant increase in teachers' pension contributions. This would have an impact on frontline services and on the take-home pay of all teachers.

Knives Seized in Schools

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Education how many knives have been seized in schools, in each of the last five years broken down by (i) primary schools and (ii) secondary schools. (AQW 7023/09)

Minister of Education: Ní bhailíonn ná ní choinníonn an Roinn an t-eolas a iarradh.

The Department does not collect or hold the information requested.

Language Training for Teachers

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have received English as an additional language training as part of their continuous professional development through (i) her Department; (ii) the Inclusion and Diversity Scheme; and (iii) the Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (AQW 7053/09)

Minister of Education: Tugann mo Roinn cistiú don Seirbhís um Chuimsiú agus Éagsúlacht (IDS) le forbairt profisiúnta a sholáthar do mhúinteoirí. Maidir le oideachas do dhaltaí núíosacha, soláthraíonn IDS oiliúint scoilbhunaithe, cé go raibh an oiliúint ionadhbunaithe roimhe sin.

My Department funds the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) to provide professional development to teachers. In relation to the education of newcomer pupils IDS provide school-based training, although previously training was centre-based.

In 2007/08, a total of 709 teachers (primary and post-primary) received centre-based professional development. In 2008/09, this figure was 459 teachers. After the appointment of diversity coordinators and assistant advisers school-based training was gradually introduced.

The IDS only records the number of schools supported via school-based training, which in 2008/09 was over 130 schools. Therefore a record of the number of teachers trained by this method is not held.

Youth Service Provision in East Belfast

Mr R Newton asked the Minister of Education to confirm the capital build programme for youth service provision in East Belfast; and when it will start. (AQW 7066/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has confirmed that a new Statutory Youth Centre is to be built in the grounds of Brooklands Primary School, Dundonald at an estimated cost of £750,000. Work is expected to begin in June 2009 for completion by May 2010.

The Chief Executive of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) has confirmed that the replacement of Sydenham and Archway Youth Clubs has been identified as a priority. Funding has been sought for a single unit, scheduled to be built on a new site within East Belfast in the 2010/11 financial year, at an estimated cost of £1.5 million plus economic appraisal costs.

Ní chuirtear san áireamh leis seo aon thionscadal a bhaineann leis an Earnáil Óige Dheonach a bhfuil breithniú á dhéanamh air ag an Roinn Oideachais faoi láthair.

This does not include projects in the Voluntary Youth Sector currently under consideration by the Department of Education.

Irish Language Schools

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education how much money her Department spends on pupils born in Northern Ireland who are educated in Irish Language schools who consider English as their second language.

(AQW 7069/09)

Minister of Education: Níl aon dalta ag freastal ar Ghaelscoil nó ar aonad Gaeilge a rangáítear mar dhaltaí a bhfuil ‘Béarla mar Theanga Bhreise’ acu.

There are no pupils attending Irish medium schools or units who are classed as ‘English as an additional language’ pupils.

I have recently launched the policy ‘Every School a Good School - Supporting Newcomer Pupils’. Within this policy a newcomer is defined as a child or young person who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher. This policy does not refer to indigenous pupils who choose to attend an Irish medium school. That circumstance is addressed and funded under Irish Medium education policy.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Education if she has considered introducing legislation which would contain checks on the power that the Education and Skills Authority will have.

(AQW 7093/09)

Minister of Education: The Education Bill which provides for the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority also contains provisions which afford reasonable checks and balances on the operation of a public body. Schedule 1 of the Bill includes provision for accounts, annual reports and other reports to be made to the Department (and as appropriate to the Department of Employment and Learning). The Schedule further provides that complaints against any action of the ESA may be considered by the Commissioner for Complaints. Article 101 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 affords the Department the power to issue a direction to any relevant public authority in respect of any power conferred or any duty imposed on that Authority.

Tá mé sásta go dtugann sé seo réimse láidir rialuithe atá leordhóthanach le feidhmiú na gcumhachtaí a mholtar don Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna a rialú.

I am satisfied that this offers a robust range of controls adequate to control the exercise of the powers proposed for the Education and Skills Authority.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Education if she can give assurances that the Education and Skills Authority will not interfere with the running of successful schools.

(AQW 7094/09)

Minister of Education: Soláthróidh an Bille Oideachais struchtúr nua riaracháin le tacaíocht a thabhairt don ardú caighdeán i ngach scoil. Tá sé ar intinn agam go dtabharfaidh an tÚdarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna (an ESA) cuidiú do scoileanna le feabhsú ar leith a bhaint amach ó thaobh gnóthachtálacha gach dalta de.

The Education Bill will provide a new administrative structure to support the raising of standards in all schools. It is my intention that the Education and Skills Authority (the ESA) will assist schools in achieving significant improvement in the achievements of all pupils.

The arrangements being established will see local area support teams working with schools, reflecting the individual needs of each school. It would not be appropriate to characterise this relationship as one of interfering. I will also ensure that my policy of Every School a Good School will mean that all schools will be seen as successful.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Education if she can give assurances that, with the introduction of the Education and Skills Authority, schools will not lose their characters and ethos.

(AQW 7095/09)

Minister of Education: Le bunadh an Údaráis um Oideachas agus Scileanna, cuirfear tacaíocht feabhsaithe ar fáil do scoileanna, trí fhoirne tacaíochta áitiúla a bheidh níos sofhreagraí do na imthosca aonair a bhíonn acu. Is iad na scoileanna iad féin, áfach, tríd na boird rialaithe, a shocróidh an réim agus an ghné a bhaineann leis an tacaíocht seo. Níl rud ar bith sa reachtaíocht a moladh a d'fhéadfadh a bheith mar thionchar docharach do cháil nó d'éiteas na scoile.

The establishment of the Education and Skills Authority will offer schools improved support through local support teams that will be more responsive to their individual circumstances. However schools themselves, through their governing bodies, will determine the nature and scope of this support. There is nothing in the proposed legislation that should cause any detrimental impact on the character or ethos of schools.

Primary Languages Programme

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education for an updated list of the primary schools that are participating in the Primary Languages Programme, broken down by (i) parliamentary constituency; and (ii) languages that are being taught, per school. (AQW 7110/09)

Minister of Education: Tá 298 bunscoil ag glacadh páirte sa Chlár Teangacha Bunscoile faoi láthair. Leagtar amach sna táblaí thíos na scoileanna, agus an teanga atá á teagasc i ngach ceann acu, de réir toghcheantair pharlaiminte.

There are currently 298 primary schools participating in the Primary Languages Programme. The schools, and the language being taught in each, are set out by parliamentary constituency in the tables below.

A further 25 primary schools are currently awaiting the allocation of language tutors. In addition to this, I have made additional funding available to expand the programme, which will mean that still more primary pupils will benefit from the Programme.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN THE PRIMARY LANGUAGES PROGRAMME

CONSTITUENCY – BELFAST EAST

St Bernard's Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Euston Street Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Knocknagoney Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Lisnasharragh Primary School	Belfast	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – BELFAST NORTH

Holy Cross Boys' Primary School	Belfast	Irish
Holy Family Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Sacred Heart Primary School	Belfast	Irish
Whitehouse Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Glenwood Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Mercy Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Seaview Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St Therese of Lisieux Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Wheatfield Primary School	Belfast	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – BELFAST SOUTH

St Malachy's Primary School	Belfast	Irish
Fane Street Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Forge Integrated Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St Michael's Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Taughmonagh Primary School	Belfast	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – BELFAST WEST

Donegall Road Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
Malvern Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St John the Baptist Boys' Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St John the Baptist Girls' Primary School	Belfast	Spanish
St Kevin's Primary School	Belfast	Irish
St Kieran's Primary School	Poleglass	Irish
St Mark's Primary School	Twinbrook	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Belfast	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – EAST ANTRIM

Ballycarry Primary School	Ballycarry	Spanish
Acorn Integrated Primary School	Carrickfergus	Spanish
Victoria Primary School	Carrickfergus	Spanish
Carrickfergus Model Primary School	Carrickfergus	Spanish
St James' Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Glynn Primary School	Glynn	Spanish
Greenisland Primary School	Greenisland	Spanish
Silverstream Primary School	Greenisland	Spanish
Kilcoan Primary School	Larne	Spanish
Olderfleet Primary School	Larne	Spanish
Oakfield Primary School	Carrickfergus	Spanish
Lourdes Primary School	Whitehead	Spanish
Whitehead Primary School	Whitehead	Spanish
St Nicholas' Primary School	Carrickfergus	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – EAST DERRY

Culcrow Primary School	Aghadowey	Spanish
St Finlough's Primary School	Ballykelly	Irish
Ballyhackett Primary School	Castlerock	Spanish

Ballysally Primary School	Coleraine	Spanish
Castleroe Primary School	Coleraine	Spanish
Damhead Primary School	Coleraine	Spanish
St Columba's Primary School	Garvagh	Irish
St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School	Garvagh	Irish
Faughanvale Primary School	Greysteel	Irish
Kilrea Primary School	Kilrea	Spanish
Limavady Central Primary School	Limavady	Spanish
St Aidan's Primary School	Limavady	Spanish
Irish Society's Primary School	Mountsandel	Spanish
Carnalridge Primary School	Portrush	Spanish
Millstrand Integrated Primary School	Portrush	Spanish
Portrush Primary School	Portrush	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Portrush	Spanish
Portstewart Primary School	Portstewart	Spanish
St Peter's & St Paul's Primary School	Dungiven	Irish

CONSTITUENCY – FERMANAGH AND SOUTH TYRONE

St Mary's Primary School	Bellanaleck	Spanish
Blessed Patrick O'loughran Primary School	Castlecaulfield	Spanish
St Nailes Primary School	Kinawley	Spanish
Holy Trinity Primary School	Cornagrade	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Derrylin	Spanish
Lisferty Primary School	Dungannon	Spanish
Brookeborough Primary School	Enniskillen	Spanish
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	Enniskillen	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Mullinakea	Spanish
Maguiresbridge Primary School	Maguiresbridge	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Maguiresbridge	Spanish
St John's Primary School	Moy	Irish
Howard Primary School	Moygashel	Spanish
Lisbellaw Primary School	Tatnamallaght	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Tempo	Spanish
Cornagague Primary School	Enniskillen	Irish
Killyhommon Primary School	Enniskillen	Irish
Moat Primary School	Enniskillen	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Augher	Irish

St Eugene's Primary School	Lisnaskea	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Caledon	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Newtownbutler	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Ballygawley	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Aughnacloy	Irish
St Ninnidh's Primary School	Enniskillen	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Dungannon	Irish

CONSTITUENCY – FOYLE

Glendermott Primary School	Ballyshasky	Spanish
Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir	Brandywell	Spanish
Cumber Claudy Primary School	Claudy	Spanish
St Colmcille's Primary School	Claudy	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Claudy	Spanish
Broadbridge Primary School	Eglinton	Spanish
Drumahoe Primary School	Derry	Spanish
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	Derry	Spanish
Newbuildings Primary School	Newbuildings	Spanish
Holy Family Primary School	Derry	Spanish
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School	Strathfoyle	Spanish
Fountain Primary School	Derry	Spanish
Ebrington Controlled Primary School	Waterside	Spanish
Good Shepherd Pr and Nursery School	Waterside	Spanish
Rosemount Primary School	Derry	Irish

CONSTITUENCY – LAGAN VALLEY

Ballinderry Primary School	Ballinderry Upper	Spanish
Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School	Ballinderry Upper	Spanish
St Michael's Primary School (Finnis)	Dromara	Spanish
Christ the Redeemer Primary School	Dunmurry	Spanish
Dunmurry Primary School	Dunmurry	Spanish
Seymour Hill Primary School	Dunmurry	Spanish
Ballymacrickett Primary School	Glenavy	Spanish
St Colman's Primary School	Lambeg	Irish
Brownlee Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish
Killowen Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish
Riverdale Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish

St Aloysius Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish
Anahilt Primary School	Hillsborough	Spanish
Fort Hill Primary School	Lisburn	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – MID ULSTER

Greenlough Primary School (St Mary's)	Clady	Irish
St Brigid's Primary School	Coalisland	Irish
St John's Primary School	Coalisland	Spanish
Donaghmore Primary School	Donaghmore	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Draperstown	Irish
Bush Primary School	Dungannon	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Knockloughrim	Irish
Cookstown Primary School	Cookstown	Spanish
St John's Primary School	Swatragh	Irish
Amperstaine Primary School	Maghera	Spanish
Culnady Primary School	Maghera	Spanish
Drumard Primary School	Maghera	Spanish
Altayeskey Primary School	Draperstown	Irish
Ballylifford Primary School	Cookstown	Spanish
Castledawson Primary School	Castledawson	Spanish
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	Draperstown	Spanish
Holy Trinity Primary School	Cookstown	Irish
Knockloughrim Primary School	Knockloughrim	Spanish
Lissan Primary School	Cookstown	Spanish
Magherafelt Controlled Primary School	Magherafelt	Spanish
Spires Integrated Primary School	Magherafelt	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School Tirkane	Maghera	Spanish
St Columb's Primary School (Cullion)	Desertmartin	Spanish
St John Bosco Primary School	Portglenone	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Cookstown	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Bellaghy	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Cookstown	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Stewartsown	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School	Coalisland	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School	Donaghmore	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School (Glen)	Maghera	Irish

St Patrick's Primary School	Magherafelt	Spanish
Tobermore Primary School	Tobermore	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – NEWRY AND ARMAGH

Lisnadill Primary School	Armagh	Spanish
Cortamlet Primary School	Altnamachin	Spanish
Mount St Catherine's Primary School	Armagh	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School	Armagh	Irish
Our Lady's Primary School	Benburb	Irish
St Jarlath's Primary School	Blackwatertown	Irish
St Malachy's Primary School	Camlough	Irish
St Malachy's Primary School	Carnagat	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Crossmaglen	Irish
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School	Forkhill	Spanish
St Francis of Assisi Primary School	Keady	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Keady	Spanish
Clea Primary School	Keady	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Killeavy	Spanish
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School	Kilmore	Irish
St Johns Primary School	Middletown	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Mullaghbawn	Irish
St Josephs and St James Primary School	Poyntzpass	Spanish
Hardy Memorial Primary School	Richill	Spanish
Armstrong Primary School	Armagh	Spanish
Cloughoge Primary School	Newry	Spanish
Jonesboro' Primary School	Newry	Spanish
Poyntzpass Primary School	Poyntzpass	Spanish
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Newry	Spanish
St Colman's Abbey Primary School	Newry	Spanish
Windsor Hill Primary School	Newry	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY - NORTH ANTRIM

Fourtowns Primary School	Ahoghill	Spanish
Longstone Primary School	Ahoghill	Spanish
Armoy Primary School	Armoy	Spanish
St Olcan's Primary School	Armoy	Spanish
Hazelbank Primary School	Aughafatten	Spanish

Ballycastle Controlled Integrated Primary School	Ballycastle	Spanish
St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School	Ballycastle	Spanish
Ballykeel Primary School	Ballymena	Spanish
Carniny Primary School	Ballymena	Spanish
Dunclug Primary School	Ballymena	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Ballymena	Spanish
Kilmoyle Primary School	Ballymoney	Spanish
Landhead Primary School	Ballymoney	Spanish
Leaney Primary School	Ballymoney	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Ballymoney	Spanish
Broughshane Primary School	Broughshane	Spanish
Bushmills Primary School	Bushmills	Spanish
Buick Memorial Primary School	Cullybackey	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Cushendall	Irish
St Ciaran's Primary School	Cushendun	Spanish
Gracehill Primary School	Gracehill	Spanish
Kells & Connor Primary School	Kells	Spanish
Straidbilly Primary School	Liscolman	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Loughguile	Irish
Barnish Primary School	Ballycastle	Irish
Garryduff Primary School	Ballymoney	Spanish
Portglenone Primary School	Portglenone	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Cloughmills	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Portglenone	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – NORTH DOWN

St Comgall's Primary School	Bangor	Spanish
Hollywood Primary School	Hollywood	Spanish
Ballyvester Primary School	Donaghadee	Spanish
Donaghadee Primary School	Donaghadee	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY - SOUTH ANTRIM

Creavery Primary School	Antrim	Spanish
Parkhall Primary School	Antrim	Spanish
Antrim Primary School	Antrim	Spanish
Straid Primary School	Ballyclare	Spanish

Tir-na-Nog Primary School	Ballyclare	Spanish
Ballynure Primary School	Ballynure	Spanish
Doagh Primary School	Doagh	Spanish
Ballyhenry Primary School	Glengormley	Spanish
Earlview Primary School	New Mossley	Spanish
Carnmoney Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Mallusk Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Mossgrove Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Mossley Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
St Mary's on the Hill Primary School	Newtownabbey	Spanish
Loanends Primary School	Crumlin	Spanish
Straidhavern Primary School	Crumlin	Spanish
St Macnisius' Primary School	Tannaghmore	Irish
Carlane Primary School	Toomebridge	Spanish
Crumlin Primary School	Crumlin	Spanish
Duneane Primary School	Toomebridge	Spanish
Groggan Primary School	Randalstown	Spanish
Mount St Michael's Primary School	Randalstown	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Crumlin	Spanish
Templepatrick Primary School	Templepatrick	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – SOUTH DOWN

Holy Cross Primary School	Atticall	Spanish
Ballyholland Primary School	Ballyholland	Irish
Christ the King Primary School	Ballynahinch	Irish
Drumadonnell Primary School	Ballyroney	Spanish
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	Castlewellan	Spanish
St Malachy's Primary School	Castlewellan	Irish
St Patrick's Primary (Burrenreagh)	Castlewellan	Spanish
Cumran Primary School	Clough	Spanish
Cedar Integrated Primary School	Crossgar	Spanish
Glasswater Primary School	Crossgar	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Crossgar	Spanish
Holy Family Primary School	Downpatrick	Irish
St Brigid's Primary School	Downpatrick	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Downpatrick	Spanish

Sacred Heart Primary School	Dundrum	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School	Hilltown	Irish
St Joseph's Primary School	Killough	Spanish
St Macartan's Primary School	Loughinisland	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Mayobridge	Irish
All Childrens Integrated Primary School	Newcastle	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Newcastle	Spanish
Moneydarragh Primary School	Newry	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Rathfriland	Irish
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	Rostrevor	Spanish
St Bronagh's Primary School	Rostrevor	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Saintfield	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Strangford	Spanish
St Malachy's Primary School	Strangford	Spanish
Ballynahinch Primary School	Ballynahinch	Spanish
Carrick Primary School	Warrenpoint	Irish
St Colman's Primary School	Banbridge	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – STRANGFORD

Alexander Dickson Primary School	Ballygowan	Spanish
Kirkistown Primary School	Cloughey	Spanish
Kircubbin Primary School	Kircubbin	Spanish
Millennium Integrated Primary School	Lisdoonan	Irish
Carrickmannon Primary School	Newtownards	Spanish
Newtownards Model Primary School	Newtownards	Spanish
Portaferry Integrated Primary School	Portferry	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Portferry	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Portferry	Spanish
Ballycloughan Primary School	Saintfield	Spanish
St Caolan's Primary School	Saintfield	Irish
St Joseph's Primary School	Carryduff	Irish
Carrowdore Primary School	Carrowdore	Spanish
Carryduff Primary School	Carryduff	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – UPPER BANN

St Brendan's Primary School	Craigavon	Irish
St Mary's Primary School	Lurgan	Irish

St Patrick's Primary School	Magheralin	Irish
Hart Memorial Primary School	Portadown	Spanish
Portadown Integrated Primary School	Portadown	Spanish
Richmount Primary School	Portadown	Spanish
Seagoe Primary School	Portadown	Spanish
Donacloney Primary School	Donacloney	Spanish
Milltown Primary School	Banbridge	Spanish
St Mary's Primary School	Banbridge	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Aughagallon	Spanish
St Teresa's Primary School	Lurgan	Spanish

CONSTITUENCY – WEST TYRONE

St Mary's Primary School	Ballymagorry	Irish
Gaelscoil na gCrann	Ballynamullan	Spanish
Bready Jubilee Primary School	Bready	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Carrickmore	Irish
St Columbkille's Primary School	Carrickmore	Spanish
Bridgehill Primary School	Castledearg	Spanish
Edwards Primary School	Castledearg	Spanish
Cooley Primary School	Cooley	Spanish
Donemana Primary School	Donemana	Spanish
Tummery Primary School	Dromore	Irish
Envagh Primary School	Drumquin	Spanish
St Joseph's Primary School	Drumquin	Irish
St Matthew's Primary School	Garvaghey	Irish
Dunmullan Primary School	Knockmoyle	Spanish
St Brigid's Primary School	Mountfield	Irish
St Patrick's Primary School	Newtownstewart	Spanish
Christ the King Primary School	Omagh	Spanish
Gortnagarn Primary School	Omagh	Spanish
Loreto Convent Primary School	OMAGH	Spanish
Sion Mills Primary School	Sion Mills	Spanish
St Teresa's Primary School	Sixmilecross	Irish
Drumnabey Primary School	Spamount	Irish
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	Strabane	Spanish
St Anne's Primary School	Strabane	Spanish
St Mary's Girls' Primary School	Strabane	Spanish

Knocknagor Primary School	Trillick	Irish
Queen Elizabeth II Primary School	Trillick	Spanish
St Scire's Primary School	Trillick	Spanish
All Saints Primary School	Omagh	Irish
Drumduff Primary School	Sixmilecross	Irish
Recarson Primary School	Omagh	Irish
St Mary's Primary	Omagh	Spanish
St Patrick's Primary School	Castledearg	Irish

Educational Psychologists

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what the waiting time is for an assessment by an educational psychologist, in each of the Education and Library Boards. (AQW 7131/09)

Minister of Education: Dhíreoinn aird an Chomhalta ar an fhreagra a thug mé ar AQO 712/09, a chuir an Comhalta Stephen Moutray ó thoghcheantar na Banna Uachtair agus a foilsíodh sa Tuairisc Oifigiúil ar 24 Deireadh Fómhair 2008.

I would refer the Member to my reply to AQO 712/09, tabled by the Member for Upper Bann, Stephen Moutray, and published in the Official Report on 24 October 2008. Please note however that since that time the figure provided by the Belfast Education and Library Board in respect of Stage 3 assessments has been revised to 43 days.

Youth Workers

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education how many youth workers are planned for the Lagan Valley constituency, in the next three years. (AQW 7133/09)

Minister of Education: Faoi láthair, is é an Roinn Oideachais a thugann cistiú do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt agus do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt le haghaidh soláthair don óige i dToghcheantar Ghleann an Lagáin.

The Department of Education currently provides funding to the Southern and South Eastern Education and Library Board for the youth provision in the Lagan Valley Constituency. The Chief Executives of both Boards have advised that they have no plans to change the current level of youth workers in the area. It will be the responsibility of the new Education and Skills Authority to determine how it deploys resources for the youth service from January 2010.

The current level of youth workers in the Lagan Valley Constituency is as follows:

	Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
Southern Education and Library Board	1	8
South Eastern Education and Library Board	5	22

Youth Workers

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education how many youth workers are employed in the Lagan Valley constituency. (AQW 7134/09)

Minister of Education: Faoi láthair, is é an Roinn Oideachais a thugann cistiú do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt agus do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt le haghaidh soláthair don óige i dToghcheantar Ghleann an Lagáin.

The Department of Education currently provides funding to the Southern and South Eastern Education and Library Boards for the youth provision in the Lagan Valley Constituency. The Chief Executives of both Boards have provided the following information on the number of youth workers in the Lagan Valley Constituency -

	Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
Southern Education and Library Board	1	8
South Eastern Education and Library Board	5	22

Primary School Uniforms

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Education (i) how many children will benefit annually from her plans to introduce grants for Primary school uniforms; (ii) how much money is being made available for each grant; (iii) how will the scheme be managed; and (iv) when the first grants will be available. (AQW 7148/09)

Minister of Education: Measann an Roinn go mbeidh 29,000 páiste i dteideal deontas d'éidí bunscoile a fháil gach bliain. Tá deontas de £35 in aghaidh an pháiste ar fáil a chuimseoidh gach riachtanas éidí scoile, éidí don chorpoideachas san áireamh.

The Department estimates that 29,000 children will be eligible annually for the Primary school uniform grant, which has been set at £35 per child to cover all uniform requirements including physical education. The scheme will be managed by the Education and Library Boards until the formation of the Education and Skills Authority, when the latter will assume responsibility. The first grants will be available for the 2009/10 school year.

Portadown College

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 6739/09, if, as part of the economic appraisal of Portadown College and among the 'full range of feasible options' to be considered, the board of Governors' preferred option of building on the existing College footprint will be taken into account. (AQW 7156/09)

Minister of Education: Déanfaidh an breithmheas measúnú ar réimse iomlán na roghanna inmharthana lena n-áirítear na costais a bhaineann le gach ceann acu.

The appraisal is to assess the full range of viable options including the financial costs of each. This will include the Board of Governors' preferred option for the building on the footprint of the existing College site.

Portadown College

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 6739/09, if, as part of the economic appraisal for Portadown College and among the 'full range of feasible options' to be considered, the financial cost of the Board of Governors' preferred option of building on the existing college footprint will be considered alongside that of the existing proposal. (AQW 7160/09)

Minister of Education: Déanfaidh an breithmheas measúnú ar réimse iomlán na roghanna inmharthana lena n-áirítear na costais a bhaineann le gach ceann acu.

The appraisal is to assess the full range of viable options including the financial costs of each. This will include the Board of Governors' preferred option for the building on the footprint of the existing College site.

Special Needs Facilities

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education which special needs facilities are being closed in the North Down area. (AQW 7174/09)

Minister of Education: Tá dhá aonad Phríomh Eochair 3 ag Donaghadee High School. Tá an scoil le druidim i mí Lúnasa 2009 ach meastar go bhfuil gá ann aonad amháin a choinneáil. Beidh an t-aonad seo athlonnaithe ag Dundonald High School ón 1 Meán Fómhair 2009.

There are two Key Stage 3 units at Donaghadee High School. The school is due to close in August 2009 but it is considered that there is the need for one of the units to continue. This unit, which is for Year 10 pupils, will be relocated at Dundonald High School from 1 September, 2009.

Special Needs Facilities

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education if the special needs facility at Clandeboye Road Primary School is to be closed. (AQW 7175/09)

Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios dom ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt go ndéanann an Bord athbhreithniú ar aonaid MLD ar bhonn bhliantúil lena chinntiú go bhfreastalaíonn an tsoláthar ar na riachtanais mar is ceart agus go mbaintear an úsáid is fearr as na hacmhainní.

I am advised by the South Eastern Education and Library Board that the Board reviews MLD units on an annual basis to ensure that provision meets need and to make best use of resources.

The Board has decided that the Key Stage 2 Unit at Clandeboye Primary School will be suspended with effect from 31 August 2009 as there is capacity within the North Down area to meet current and projected needs in the incoming year.

Youth Workers

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail how many youth workers are planned for the North Down constituency in the next three years. (AQW 7181/09)

Minister of Education: Faoi láthair, tugann an Roinn Oideachais cistiú do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt le haghaidh soláthair don aos óg i dToghcheantar an Dúin Thuaidh.

The Department of Education currently provides funding to the South Eastern Education and Library Board for the youth provision in the North Down Constituency.

The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that while they have no plans to change the current level of full time youth workers in the area, they are proposing to recruit a further 6 part time staff in the area over the next three years. However, it will be the responsibility of the new Education and Skills Authority to determine how it deploys resources for the youth service from January 2010

The current level of youth workers in the North Down Constituency is as follows:

	Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
South Eastern Education and Library Board	7	33

Youth Workers

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education, how many youth workers are employed in the North Down constituency. (AQW 7182/09)

Minister of Education: Faoi láthair, tugann an Roinn Oideachais cistiú do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt le haghaidh soláthair don aos óg i dToghcheantar an Dúin Thuaidh. Tá an t-eolas seo a leanas curtha ar fáil ag Príomhfheidhmeannach an Bhoird maidir le líon na n-oibrí don aos óg i dToghcheantar an Dúin Thuaidh.

The Department of Education currently provides funding to the South Eastern Education and Library Board for the youth provision in the North Down Constituency. The Chief Executive of the Board has provided the following information on the number of youth workers in the North Down Constituency -

	Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
South Eastern Education and Library Board	7	33

Inclusion and Diversity Service

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education if the Inclusion and Diversity Service will be training substitute teachers who are not in long term temporary posts to enable them to assist non-English speaking pupils. (AQW 7192/09)

Minister of Education: Tugann mo Roinn cistiú don Seirbhís um Chuimsitheacht agus Éagsúlacht, a bhí bunaithe ag an cúig Bórd Oideachais agus Leabarlainne (ELBanna) le forbairt profisiúnta a sholáthar do mhúinteoirí a bhfuil daltaí nuáíocha ina scoileanna acu. Ní dhéantar idirdhealú ar sholáthar an oiliúna de réir conartha, bíodh sé buan nó sealadach.

My Department funds the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS), which was established by the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), to provide professional development to teachers who have newcomer pupils in their school. It does not discriminate in the provision of training, on the basis of temporary or permanent contracts.

School principals are responsible for determining the training needs of their teachers, including substitute teachers, and they can avail of the wide range of in-service courses offered by ELBs, including the IDS.

The provision of continuing professional development for teachers is the responsibility of the ELBs through their respective Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS). All ELBs undertake, on an annual basis, a needs analysis of the training required by schools in the forthcoming academic year.

Northern Ireland Block

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education if she is making bids for any of the additional money provided to the Northern Ireland Block, under the provisions of the Budget of 22 April 2009. (AQW 7207/09)

Minister of Education: The Finance Minister has advised that the outworking of the British Chancellor's announcements in respect of the 2009/10 financial year would be incorporated into the Executive's decisions as regards the forthcoming June Monitoring Round in line with local needs and priorities.

Is féidir liom a dheimhniú go bhfuil sé ar intinn agam cur isteach ar acmhainní breise d'oideachas sa bhabhta monatóireachta i mí Meithimh. I dtaca leis an chistiú breise a cuireadh ar fáil do 2010/11, is féidir liom a dheimhniú go bhfuil sé ar intinn agam cur isteach ar acmhainní breise d'oideachas in 2010/11 má bhíonn deis ann.

I can confirm that I intend to bid for additional resources for education, including resources needed to maintain the Extended Schools programme at current levels, in the June monitoring round. With regards to the additional funding made available in 2010/11, I can again confirm that I intend to bid for additional resources for education in 2010/11 when the opportunity arises.

Non-UK Nationals

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many non-UK nationals have been enrolled in secondary schools in the (i) controlled sector; (ii) maintained sector; (iii) integrated sector; and (iv) Irish Medium sector, broken down by (a) total enrolment; and (b) percentage of the total numbers of pupils enrolled in each sector. (AQW 7224/09)

Minister of Education: Ní bhailítear an t-eolas a iarradh. Ach tá eolas ar chúlra eitneach na ndaltaí agus ar líon na ndaltaí a bhfuil Béarla acu mar theanga bhreise ar fáil. Is féidir an t-eolas seo a fháil tríd na naisc ghréasáin seo a leanas:

The information requested is not collected. However, information on the ethnic background of pupils and the numbers of pupils with English as an additional language is available. These may be accessed via the following web links.

Pupil Ethnicity by ELB 2008/09

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_education_and_library_board_level/statistics_and_research_education_and_library_board_data_2008_09.htm

Pupils with English as an additional language 2001/02 – 2008/09

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm .

Education Welfare Officers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many vacancies there are for Education Welfare Officers, in each of the Education and Library Boards. (AQW 7225/09)

Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne gur mar seo a leanas atá líon na bhfolúntas d'Oifigigh Leasa Oideachais:

The Education and Library Boards have advised of the following number of vacancies for Education Welfare Officers:

Board	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Number of Vacancies	2	2	3	0	0

Post-Primary Teachers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many sick days have been taken by post-primary teachers in (i) the controlled sector; (ii) the voluntary grammar school sector; (iii) the maintained sector; (iv) the integrated sector; and (v) the Irish Medium Sector, broken down by Education and Library Board, in each of the last five years. (AQW 7235/09)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

2003/04

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	3679	8755	5972	5828	3375	27609
Controlled Integrated	0	0	991	256	0	1247
Grant Maintained Integrated	871	957	946	311	998	4083
Irish Medium	225	0	0	0	0	225
Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic Maintained	6185	4333	2611	9215	7688	30032
Total	10960	14045	10520	15610	12061	63196

2004/05

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	2884	6610	5852	6059	2981	24386
Controlled Integrated	0	0	931	611	0	1542
Grant Maintained Integrated	780	685	1301	256	1011	4033
Irish Medium	161	0	0	0	0	161
Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic Maintained	5069	3821	2072	9562	6778	27302
Total	8894	11116	10156	16488	10770	57424

2005/06

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	3606	9036	7072	7180	4324	31218
Controlled Integrated	0	0	1250	297	0	1547
Grant Maintained Integrated	874	892	1061	671	1134	4632
Irish Medium	194	0	0	0	0	194
Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic Maintained	6116	5330	3320	10716	7596	33078
Total	10790	15258	12703	18864	13054	70669

2006/07

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	3303	9401	6445	5378	3235	27762
Controlled Integrated	0	0	1080	214	0	1294
Grant Maintained Integrated	919	1478	1373	982	1269	6021
Irish Medium	215	0	0	0	0	215
Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic Maintained	6182	4294	3213	9800	7185	30674
Total	10619	15173	12111	16374	11689	65966

2007/08

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	2718	8227	6147	5278	2610	24980
Controlled Integrated	0	1	884	297	0	1182
Grant Maintained Integrated	1143	1095	1241	466	1013	4958
Irish Medium	164	0	0	0	0	164
Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic Maintained	4660	4456	2617	8878	6212	26823
Total	8685	13779	10889	14919	9835	58107

Primary School Teachers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many sick days have been taken by primary school teachers in each sector, broken down by Education and Library Board, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 7238/09)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

2003/04

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	4223	9352	7977	5965	2710	30227
Controlled Integrated	42	156	160	9	0	367

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Grant Maintained Integrated	147	566	202	628	296	1839
Other Maintained	0	53	5	19	0	
Irish Medium	293	0	114	43	78	528
Catholic Maintained	5936	4996	4675	12027	9862	37496
Total	10641	15123	13133	18691	12946	70534

2004/05

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	2944	7654	6683	4807	2465	24553
Controlled Integrated	23	350	575	15	0	963
Grant Maintained Integrated	169	264	198	539	141	1311
Other Maintained	0	1	0	26	0	27
Irish Medium	261	1	154	33	81	530
Catholic Maintained	5142	4761	4277	11964	8006	34150
Total	8539	13031	11887	17384	10693	61534

2005/06

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	3459	10069	8381	5721	3593	31223
Controlled Integrated	106	363	428	13	0	910
Grant Maintained Integrated	131	308	240	635	322	1636
Other Maintained	0	7	2	29	0	38
Irish Medium	303	1	180	232	177	893
Catholic Maintained	6852	5577	4964	14869	9729	41991
Total	10851	16325	14195	21499	13821	76691

2006/07

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	3563	8884	6811	5977	3518	28753
Controlled Integrated	16	259	601	12	55	943
Grant Maintained Integrated	198	359	338	761	541	2197
Other Maintained	0	10	21	79	0	110
Irish Medium	599	0	34	76	219	928
Catholic Maintained	6120	5220	4530	14036	9579	39485
Total	10496	14732	12335	20941	13912	72416

2007/08

Sector	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
Controlled	4047	8614	6563	6871	3844	29939
Controlled Integrated	34	296	192	5	7	534
Grant Maintained Integrated	333	467	193	426	449	1868
Other Maintained	0	9	6	51	0	66
Irish Medium	607	2	52	89	146	896
Catholic Maintained	5200	4492	4472	11487	9440	35091
Total	10221	13880	11478	18929	13886	68394

Free School Meals

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many pupils receive free school meals in the Upper Bann constituency. (AQW 7250/09)

Minister of Education: Athraíonn líon na bpáistí a mbíonn béilí scoile acu ar bhonn seachtainiúil.

The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. However, information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers taking meals on the day on which census information is gathered.

On the date of the most recent School Meals Census, 10th October 2008, 2,698 pupils in the Upper Bann parliamentary constituency received free school meals.

Selective/Non-Selective System

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education what assessment she has made of the length of time taken by other countries to change from a selective system to one that is non-selective. (AQO 2531/09)

Minister of Education: Bíonn imthosca difriúil i ngach tír, agus ní bhíonn pointe tosaigh agus deiridh glansoiléir ann maidir leis an idirthréimhse ó chóras roghnach chuig córas neamhroghnach i gcónaí, rud a fhágann go mbíonn sé deacair comparáidí a dhéanamh.

Each country's circumstances are different, and the period of transition from a selective to non-selective system does not always have a clear cut start and end point, making direct comparisons difficult.

In general terms, the assessment that I would make is that countries which have decided to transform their education systems in this way have prospered, as evidenced by the PISA performance ratings. The rate at which non-selective systems emerge from a period of transition is variable, and depends very much on individual circumstances.

I proposed a three year period of transition here, believing that to be a reasonable period given that demographic decline has for some time now been effecting an unmanaged transition, with an ever increasing number of grammar schools forced to dilute the academic nature of their intakes. My preference was to manage this transition in an orderly fashion, within a regulated framework, but instead, for reasons which have been explained many times in this Assembly, we must proceed without regulation and according to the Transfer 2010 Guidance.

Reform is needed urgently and any further delay will only perpetuate the inequalities associated with the outgoing arrangements. The rest of the island of Ireland moved to a non-selective system many years ago, now it is time for the north to follow suit.

Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education what provision is made within the curriculum in relation to energy efficiency and climate change. (AQO 2533/09)

Minister of Education: Sílim go bhfuil páirt le glacadh ag gach duine againn agus muid ag diriú ar Fhorbairt Inbhuanaíthe, a bhfuil eifeachtacht fuinnimh agus an t-athrú aeráide mar chodanna di, le cosaint a thabhairt don timpeallacht ar son na glúinte atá le teacht.

We all have a part to play in addressing issues of Sustainable Development, which include energy efficiency and climate change, to protect our environment for future generations. The statutory revised curriculum which I am introducing includes Education for Sustainable Development from Year 1 onwards.

Through Education for Sustainable Development, pupils will explore issues such as environmental and climate change and the need to manage human impact on the environment. At primary level pupils will have the opportunity to appreciate the environment, their role in maintaining and improving it, and understand how their actions can affect the environment.

As they move into post-primary they will have the opportunity to come to understand the interdependence of society, the economy and the environment; to develop respect for the needs of both present and future generations; to act towards promoting an improved environment; and to learn about exercising environmental responsibility through, for example, conservation of resources, waste management and the promotion of local biodiversity.

Post-Primary Transfer: Academic Criteria

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education whether the right for any school wishing to use academic criteria for post-primary transfer remains on the statute book. (AQO 2534/09)

Minister of Education: Dhíreoinn aird an chomhalta ar an chomhfhreagra a thug mé ar AQW 5829/09, AQW 5839/09 agus AQW 5859/09 a chuir David Simpson MLA, agus a foilsíodh sa Tuairisc Oifigiúil ar 6 Márta 2009.

I refer the member to my combined answer to questions AQW 5829/09, AQW 5839/09 and AQW 5859/09 raised by David Simpson MLA, published in the Official Report on 6 March 2009.

Irish-Language Proficiency

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the level of proficiency in the Irish language that is required before a person is able to teach in an Irish medium school. (AQO 2536/09)

Minister of Education: Caithfear go mbeidh eolas leordhóthánach teangeolaíoch agus oideolaíoch ag múinteoirí i nGaelscoileanna agus i gcomhthéacsanna eile dátheangacha le bheith ábalta an curaclam a theagasc.

Teachers in Irish-medium and other bilingual contexts must have sufficient linguistic and pedagogical knowledge to teach the curriculum. It is the responsibility of Boards of Governors of Irish-medium schools, as employers, to ensure that their teachers have the necessary linguistic skills to work competently in the Irish-medium sector.

Academic Selection: NICCY

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Education what correspondence she has received or meetings she has attended with the Children's Commissioner in relation to academic selection. (AQO 2537/09)

Minister of Education: Bhuail mé le Coimisinéir na Leanaí cúpla uair ag ócáidí a bhain le ceisteanna oideachais éagsúla, agus bhí ceist an aistrithe iarbhunskoile faoi phlé ag cruinniú le déanaí ar 19 Feabhra 2009.

I have met with the Children's Commissioner on a number of occasions on various education issues, and the issue of post-primary transfer was discussed at a recent meeting on 19 February 2009. The issue has also been raised in correspondence with the Commissioner and I support her view that "selection of children at 11 does not work".

I am also conscious of concerns that have been expressed in the past by the Human Rights Commission about academic selection at age eleven and the protection of individual human rights.

Post-Primary Transfer: Working Group

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Education what action she will take, following the call by the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education and the education spokespersons of Protestant churches, to set up a Working Group to establish a consensus on post-primary transfer. (AQO 2538/09)

Minister of Education: After exhaustive discussions, stretching over the last two years, with every educational stakeholder on the issue of Transfer 2010, and extensive research on this issue dating back to 2000 to inform the work of the Burns led Post-Primary Review Body and later the Costello led Review of Post-Primary Education, I must make clear that we are now past the stage for further discussions. The time for action is now.

Creidim go nglacfaidh na scoileanna gramadaí leis amach anseo go mbeadh a gcuid daltaí níos fearr as, dá mbeadh siad páirteach sa chóras príomhshrutha oideachais, seachas taobh amuigh de.

I believe that the breakaway grammar schools will in time accept that their pupils are better served if they are part of, rather than outside, the mainstream education system.

Teacher Redundancy Arrangements

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to change the redundancy arrangements for teachers. (AQO 2539/09)

Minister of Education: Is ceist í socrúithe iomarcaíochta do mhúinteoirí a bhaineann lena bhfostóirí. Tá mo Roinn ag déanamh comhairliúcháin faoi láthair áfach ar dhréacht Rialacháin do mhúinteoirí (Cúiteamh i leith Iomarcaíochta agus Luathscóir).

The redundancy arrangements for teachers are a matter for their employers. However, my Department is currently consulting on draft Teachers' (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations. A single consultation exercise is being carried out for both the Draft Regulations and the Equality Screening of the Regulations. The closing date for responses is 15 May 2009.

The new regulations will have the effect of making teachers' employers liable for the cost of premature retirement compensation. They will also provide for employers to make an enhanced severance payment as an alternative to granting premature retirement. The existing provisions regarding discretionary compensation for redundancy will be retained. All necessary equality processes will be followed.

Schools Estate

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education what assessment she has made of how the schools estate will be utilised over the next five years. (AQO 2540/09)

Minister of Education: Bainfear úsáid as eastát na scoile le hoideachas d'ardchaighdeán a sholáthar dár bpáistí.

The schools estate will be used to provide our children with a high quality education.

Violence in Schools

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Education what advice her Department offers to teachers who have suffered violence on school premises. (AQO 2541/09)

Minister of Education: Bunaíodh grúpa oibre anuraidh faoi stiúir Choiste Idirbheartaíochta na Múinteoirí le himscrúdú a dhéanamh ar an fhadhb a bhaineann leis an drochíde a imrítear ar mhúinteoirí.

A working group was established last year under the aegis of the Teacher Negotiating Committee to examine the problem of abuse of teachers. The working group comprises representatives of the Department, the employing authorities and the teachers' unions. It has reviewed existing guidance and organised a workshop last November

to consider the extent and nature of teacher abuse. The group is currently completing new guidance on tackling violent behaviour in schools and dealing with the abuse of teachers, whether physical, verbal or electronic.

Responsibility for teachers' health and safety rests with teachers' employers. The employing authorities provide a range of welfare services to teachers as required, and have recently extended the provision of confidential counselling services to all teachers in grant-aided schools. They also provide advice and guidance to principals on dealing with specific school situations.

Post-Primary Transfer: Entrance Tests

Mr L Cree asked the Minister of Education what advice she is giving to principals and teachers responding to parental demands for preparation for entrance tests in an unregulated system. (AQO 2542/09)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn an chomhairle a thug mé do bhunscoileanna agus do thuismitheoirí, sa treoir ar Aistriú 2010, mo mheasúnú ar an tionchar dhiúltach a bhíonn ag aistriú acadúil iar-bhunscoile ar eispéireas oideachasúil páistí bunscoile.

The advice I have provided to primary schools and parents, in the form of the Transfer 2010 guidance, reflects my assessment of the distorting impact of academic post-primary transfer on the educational experience of primary school children. The guidance, therefore, seeks to support primary schools delivery of the primary curriculum in the interests of children and parents. I have written to the parents of all P6 children to the same effect.

The message to primary schools is that they should not be obliged or pressured in respect of a post-primary school's admissions arrangements. Primary schools understand that their role, outlined in legislation, is to continue to provide to their children an excellent primary curriculum. It is not to serve the narrow interests of the admission arrangements of a post-primary school. Teacher Unions are also providing this message to their members: The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) has advised its members against:

- involvement in the administration of entrance tests;
- preparing pupils for entrance tests;
- supervising entrance tests;
- marking entrance tests.

My message to parents is to assure them that they have no need to put their child through an entrance test. The Transfer 2010 guidance recommends that no school should operate this test and if all schools follow this guidance then, for the first time, all parents and children will be served by a fair system of transfer.

Academic Selection: Breakaway Tests

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister of Education what advice has been issued by the teaching unions to their members on the operation of any breakaway academic selection tests. (AQO 2543/09)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn an chomhairle a thug mé do bhunscoileanna agus do thuismitheoirí, sa treoir ar Aistriú 2010, mo mheasúnú ar an tionchar dhiúltach a bhíonn ag aistriú acadúil iar-bhunscoile ar eispéireas oideachasúil páistí bunscoile.

The advice I have provided to primary schools and parents, in the form of the Transfer 2010 guidance, reflects my assessment of the distorting impact of academic post-primary transfer on the educational experience of primary school children. The guidance, therefore, seeks to support primary schools' delivery of the primary curriculum in the interests of children and parents. I have written to the parents of all P6 children to the same effect.

The message to primary schools is that they should not be obliged or pressured in respect of a post-primary school's admissions arrangements. Primary schools understand that their role, outlined in legislation, is to continue to provide to their children an excellent primary curriculum. It is not to serve the narrow interests of the admission arrangements of a post-primary school. Teacher Unions are providing this message to their members: The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) states that members are advised against:

- involvement in the administration of entrance tests;
- preparing pupils for entrance tests;
- supervising entrance tests;

- marking entrance tests.

I also wholeheartedly endorse comments from the Ulster Teachers' Union that grammar schools setting entrance tests "are making primary principals and P6 and 7 teachers the targets for the concerns and frustrations of parents. We must not allow ourselves and the curriculum we offer to children in primary schools to be dictated to by a minority."

Education and Skills Authority

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Education how the Bill for the Education Skills Authority will affect the voluntary principle under which some schools operate. (AQO 2544/09)

Minister of Education: Níl sé i gceist agam cur isteach ar an phrionsabal deonach faoina mbíonn roinnt scoileanna á fheidhmiú.

It is not my intention to erode the voluntary principle under which some schools operate. The proposed arrangements do not involve any real, or practical, loss of autonomy, as boards of governors will remain responsible for the exercise of employment functions in their schools, and will take employment decisions that ESA will be under a legal duty to put into effect.

The aim of the policy is to achieve greater consistency, transparency and accountability in the employment arrangements for grant aided schools. The aim is not to reduce autonomy in employment matters, but to ensure that it is available to all schools on the basis of equality, rather than to some schools on the basis of historical differences in ownership, and in a way that reflects the needs and capacity of each school.

Educational Underachievement Working Group

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Education what work programme the North South Ministerial Council has arranged for the recently established joint Educational Underachievement Working Group. (AQO 2545/09)

Minister of Education: At the last meeting of the Council, Ministers endorsed proposals for future work on Educational Underachievement which will initially focus on interventions to support parents and families in helping children with education, and challenges facing children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

My Ministerial colleagues agreed that the Underachievement Working Group will provide an early focus on interventions supporting parents and families in helping their children with education. The group has identified a programme to recognise and disseminate good practice examples of how teachers in schools serve the most disadvantaged communities and raise expectations among pupils and parents for improved educational attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the group will work in partnership to explore the specific challenges facing children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly Traveller children, newcomer families, children with learning or other disabilities, and children suffering social impacts such as alcohol or drug misuse in the home, or domestic violence and sexual violence.

Tá sé beartaithe fosta go ndéanfaidh an Grúpa Oibre maoirsiú ar obair an dá ghrúpa thuaidh/theas atá ann anois a dhíríonn ar litearthacht agus uimhearthacht agus ar fhreastal agus choinneáil daltaí.

It is envisaged that the Working Group will also oversee the work of the two existing north/south groups on literacy and numeracy and on pupil attendance and retention.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Steps to Work Programme

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to confirm how many of the 438 referrals from all Jobs & Benefits Offices to TWL Training Ltd, in the County Antrim area, under Step 2 of the Steps to Work programme, have been placed under Step 1 of this programme. (AQW 7080/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): Of the 438 referrals from all Jobs and Benefit offices to TWL Training Ltd, in the Co. Antrim area, under Step 2 of the Steps to Work programme, 187 have been placed under Step 1 of this programme.

North West Regional College

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many (i) fulltime; (ii) part time; and (iii) evening students from the Strabane catchment area attend the North West Regional College Londonderry/Derry campus; and to list the courses available to them. (AQW 7081/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2007/08 academic year (latest available validated data) there were (i) 273 Full time; (ii) 898 Part time; and (iii) 544 evening enrolments from the Strabane catchment area attending the North West Regional College Londonderry/ Derry campus.

The North West Regional College has advised that all courses currently offered at the Londonderry/ Derry campus are available to students from the Strabane catchment area. While too detailed to list here, a copy of the College's prospectus containing information on all courses offered, can be downloaded from the College's website (www.nwrc.ac.uk).

Holylands Disorder

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions he has had with the Universities' Vice Chancellors in relation to the recent disorder in the Holylands area of Belfast. (AQO 2552/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I contacted the Vice Chancellor of both Queen's University and the University of Ulster on the morning of 18 March after the disorder the previous day in the Holylands area. I discussed what action had been taken on the day in relation to student behaviour and what potential there was for further action to prevent such scenes occurring in the future.

I have also invited both Vice Chancellors to attend the stakeholder forum I announced on the same date. This forum is scheduled to take place on 7 May.

FE Sector: Public Funds Expenditure

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the auditor's report into the financial management of the further education sector, what plans he has to monitor and assess more closely how public funds allocated to further education colleges are spent. (AQO 2553/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on Financial Management in the Further Education sector will be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

It would be inappropriate for me to comment in detail on the report in advance of either the PAC hearing, the Committee's report arising from the meeting or the formal response to that report from the Minister of Finance and Personnel.

I can report, however, that I am satisfied that monitoring arrangements have improved in Further Education Colleges since the Auditor's report. The formal memorandum of reply provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel will provide a comprehensive response to the Auditors report.

Construction Workers

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what programmes he has in place to assist construction workers, who are unemployed, to train and enhance their skills. (AQO 2554/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A variety of opportunities exist to help all workers aged 16 years and over who are unemployed.

In particular, for construction, Further Education Colleges across Northern Ireland have developed retraining and upskilling initiatives specifically for construction workers who are unemployed. This includes Enhanced Construction Skills and the Potential Site Supervisor Programme to be run at South Eastern Regional College after Easter. At South West College there will be training in areas of quarrying, road building and renewable energy.

Additionally, the Training for Success and Steps to Work programmes have recently been adapted to meet the emerging needs of those facing unemployment, especially apprentices

Collectively these programmes will prepare our workforce for future employment and the eventual upturn in the economy.

Vacancies/Jobseeker's Allowance: Fermanagh and South Tyrone

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the change, over the last year, in the total numbers of vacancies and Jobseeker's Allowance claimants recorded at the Jobs and Benefits Offices in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. (AQO 2555/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Over the year from March 2008 to February 2009 the total number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants recorded at the Jobs and Benefits Offices in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone area rose from 1275 to 2813, representing an increase of 120.62%.

In February 2009 the Jobs and Benefits offices in Enniskillen and Dungannon had a total of 134 vacancies, representing 286 jobs. In March 2008, the same offices had a total of 246 vacancies, representing 364 jobs.

Apprenticeships: Arm's Length Bodies

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning which arms length bodies offer apprenticeships and to what extent these are delivered. (AQO 2557/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Northern Ireland Water recently recruited 22 employees for their Water Utility apprenticeship programme and ten Royal Mail staff are starting on the Management Apprenticeship later this year. The Western Health and Social Care Trust currently provide apprenticeship training in Health and Social Care for 18 people including some private sector employees. These apprenticeships are delivered in accordance with Departmental guidelines.

My Department has held discussions with the Central Personnel Group of the Department of Finance and Personnel and Government Skills, the Sector Skills Council, to explore apprenticeships within the Civil Service. My Department is creating, as a pilot, a number of apprenticeships in business administration.

Apprentices: Public Contracts

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if there will be a requirement in procurement for a percentage of apprentices to be employed in public contracts. (AQO 2558/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Construction Industry Forum (NI) has developed 'Proposals for Promoting Equality and Sustainable Development by Sustainable Procurement in Construction'. Within this, specific proposals encourage training and skills development to build a sustainable industry. These proposals require main contracts to include a requirement that main contractors recruit one apprentice, either directly or through the supply chain, for each £2m of project value.

The NICS's Procurement Practitioners' Group, which includes representatives from Centres of Procurement Expertise with responsibility for construction procurement across government, agreed at its meeting on the 30 September 2008, to incorporate the Industry Forum's proposals, in so far as is practicable, in all new construction contracts from December 2008.

Vacancies/Jobseeker's Allowance: Mid Ulster

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the change, over the last year, in the total numbers of vacancies and Jobseeker's Allowance claimants recorded at the Jobs and Benefits Offices in Mid Ulster. (AQO 2559/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Over the year from March 2008 to February 2009 the total number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants recorded at the Jobs and Benefits Office and JobCentre in the Mid Ulster area rose from 591 to 1727 claimants representing an increase of 192.2%.

In February 2009 the Jobs & Benefits office in Magherafelt and the JobCentre in Cookstown were advertising a total of 58 vacancies, representing 87 jobs. In March 2008 the same offices displayed a total of 191 vacancies, representing 235 jobs.

Review of Teacher Training

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the Review of Teacher Training will be published. (AQO 2560/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: This is a joint review between my Department and the Department of Education. There are a number of issues within the review which are, the responsibility of the Department of Education. Accordingly I have written recently to the Minister of Education and have stressed the importance of publishing the review without further delay.

Land and Accommodation Strategy

Mr A Attwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if his Department is preparing a protocol with institutions of higher education governing acquisitions or disposals of land to ensure that, as a primary funder, the government is properly involved in the Housing Executive's land and accommodation strategy. (AQO 2561/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Acquisition or disposal of land by institutions of higher education is covered under the terms of their 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.

Furthermore as the Housing Executive and its land and accommodation strategy does not fall within my Department's remit I will not therefore be developing a protocol.

Training Schemes

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he will put in place specific training schemes in areas of high unemployment and places where there have been substantial job losses. (AQO 2562/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department's main adult return to work programme, Steps to Work, and its Local Employment Intermediary Service are already available in areas of high unemployment. In addition, there is immediate access to Steps to Work for those who become unemployed following large scale redundancies including groups such as redundant apprentices.

University Education

Mr N McCausland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any ongoing discussions between Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster about widening participation in university education; and to confirm whether his Department has participated in these discussions. (AQO 2563/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has received commitment from relevant government departments to work with it and other stakeholders, including the higher education institutions, in the development and implementation of an integrated regional strategy for widening participation. Initial meetings of a widening participation strategy group are planned to take place in the near future and a Regional Co-ordinator will be appointed shortly.

Both Queen's University and the University of Ulster are committed to future participation in the widening participation strategy group.

Conflicte Dispute Resolution

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the consultation paper on dispute resolution will be published. (AQO 2564/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A draft of the consultation document has been circulated to individual Departments for comment and is currently awaiting Executive clearance. I am committed to issuing the consultation at the earliest opportunity, however the timing of the commencement of the public consultation process will depend on when Executive clearance is received.

Vacancies/Jobseeker's Allowance: North Down

Mr L Cree asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the change, over the last year, in the total numbers of vacancies and Jobseeker's Allowance claimants recorded at the Jobs and Benefits Offices in North Down. (AQO 2565/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The economic crisis has had a significant effect on the workforce in North Down. The Job Seekers Allowance register in the North Down area has risen from 776 to 1262 in the twelve months to the end of February 2009, a 62% increase. The number of vacancies notified to the Department fell from 296 representing 641 jobs to 117 representing 202 jobs in the same period, a 61% decrease.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Manufacturing Companies in East Antrim

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what level of support her Department and its agencies (i) have given in each of the last five years; (ii) are currently giving; and (iii) will give to address the problems associated with the economic downturn, to manufacturing companies, in East Antrim. (AQW 7052/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): (i) & (ii) The table below addresses both points (i) and (ii) and provides information on the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI within the East Antrim Parliamentary Constituency Area during the five-year period 2003/04 to 2007/08, and for the most recent year 2008/09. This represents the value of support which is expected to be paid towards business-related investment during the life-time of assisted projects.

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED IN EAST ANTRIM PCA (2003/04 – 2008/09)

Year	No. of Offers	Total Assistance Offered (£m)	Total Planned Investment (£m)
2003/04	176	3.90	12.60
2004/05	175	6.36	25.95
2005/06	92	14.71	58.40
2006/07	71	9.59	24.68
2007/08	98	5.26	24.49

Year	No. of Offers	Total Assistance Offered (£m)	Total Planned Investment (£m)
2008/09	93	5.74	19.76
Total	705	45.55	165.89

Notes:

1. 2008/09 figures are provisional and may be subject to change.
2. Tables may not add due to rounding.
3. Planned Investment includes Total Assistance Offered.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Start a Business Programme (SABp), which is provided by Invest NI in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland offered assistance of over £430,000 to 922 individuals in the East Antrim PCA to start their own business during the time period.

- (iii) In response to the increasingly difficult global economic conditions, Invest NI has developed a programme of actions and initiatives designed to enable its clients throughout Northern Ireland to tackle the impact of a sustained economic downturn. In particular, it has focused on the areas of cash flow management, cost reduction and improving production efficiency.

Invest NI has held seminars to offer local companies practical specialist advice on coping with the credit crunch. At the first seminar in Belfast, Invest NI's £5 million Accelerated Support Fund was launched, which can make fast track advice and assistance available to client companies which are suffering the adverse effects of the downturn.

Invest NI is currently working with clients in East Antrim to help address the very significant problems being experienced as a result of the current economic recession. The focus is on business improvement and capability building including training, skills development and process improvement. These initiatives offer opportunities to redeploy and retain skilled labour as an alternative to redundancies.

Against this difficult economic backdrop, Invest NI is proactively working intensively with the companies and entrepreneurs whose business strategies and investment decisions are essential to progressing towards the targets contained in the Executive's Programme for Government.

People Registered as Unemployed

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people were registered as unemployed in the month of April in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon Council areas, in each of the last five years. (AQW 7186/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The latest claimant count unemployment data published on 22nd April 2009, relates to March 2009 figures. This most recent claimant count data and the equivalent month's figures in each of the last four years for Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon District Council areas are given in the following table.

	Magherafelt		Cookstown		Dungannon		Northern Ireland	
	Number	Rate#	Number	Rate#	Number	Rate#	Number	Rate#
March 2005	343	1.3	352	1.7	562	1.8	29,156	2.7
March 2006	370	1.4	385	1.8	515	1.6	28,649	2.7
March 2007	267	1.0	339	1.5	475	1.4	25,928	2.4
March 2008	288	1.1	363	1.6	477	1.4	24,532	2.3
March 2009*	985	3.6	913	4.1	1,455	4.3	45,286	4.2

*Latest data, published on 22nd April 2009

#Percentage of the working age population

For information, corresponding data for Northern Ireland are also given in the above table.

April 2009 data will be published on the 13th May.

Belfast to Stranraer Ferry Service

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she has held any discussions with Stena Line about the proposal to discontinue the ferry service from Belfast to Stranraer and replace it with a slower ferry, which will increase the journey time by two or three hours. (AQW 7195/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I have not held any discussions with Stena Line on this matter.

Stena Line is one of a number of private sector ferry companies providing important sea linkages to the United Kingdom mainland which benefit the people and economy of Northern Ireland.

Stena Line are in the middle of a service rationalisation plan involving the re-siting of its terminal facilities in Northern Ireland and Scotland and replacing existing vessels with newer and more efficient ones, both of which are designed to reduce journey times, cut fuel costs and enhance passenger and freight services. Stena Line has advised that there are no plans to withdraw the high speed ferry service between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Developing Lough Neagh

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to suggest to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board that it gathers tourism statistics for the Lough Neagh region. (AQW 7219/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: There is no formal definition of a “Lough Neagh” region.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) currently provides statistics relating to tourism trips and associated spend at a Regional Tourism Partnership level (see www.nitb.com/research). Data at individual Local Authority level whilst available is not published as sample sizes are not sufficient to make information robust.

NITB will consider the possibility of collating such statistics for the Lough Neagh region, based on data for the six Local Authority areas bordering Lough Neagh, subject to a robust level of data being available.

Developing Lough Neagh

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the Northern Ireland Tourist board will promote and market Lough Neagh. (AQW 7220/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Lough Neagh’s main tourism strength lies in the range of water-based sports and activities that it has to offer. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is working to develop the Lough as a key element of its Sports, Activities and Waterways product portfolio. To this end, NITB is working closely with the Lough Neagh Partnership to ensure the work of both bodies is complementary and indeed that the tourism and leisure potential of the Lough is realised.

NITB also works to promote Northern Ireland as a short break destination to residents of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and as such recently launched a major marketing campaign that featured attractions right across Northern Ireland including Lough Neagh.

NITB includes Lough Neagh within other promotional materials including brochures and its consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com. Information on Lough Neagh is also available from our partner organisations and their websites such as Regional Tourism Partnerships, the Lough Neagh Partnership and the Countryside Access and Activities Network.

NITB will continue to work to develop, promote and market Lough Neagh as a key part of the Northern Ireland tourism offering.

Project Kelvin

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the assistance provided to date from Invest NI to Hibernia Atlantic in relation to Project Kelvin (i) for acquiring and developing a Telehouse facility in Derry City; (ii) in respect of any proposed facilities in Coleraine; and (iii) any other assistance that has been made available. (AQW 7226/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Hibernia Atlantic has been in discussion with Invest NI in relation to surveying two of the agency's regional offices (outside the North West) as potential points of presence and to understand the location of Invest NI's business parks and landholding across Northern Ireland including, but not limited to, the Derry City Council area.

Hibernia Atlantic was referred to the publicly available information on Invest NI's landholding on www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk and was provided with maps and aerial photographs of a number of its properties across Northern Ireland.

Hibernia Atlantic has also had meetings with Invest NI in April to discuss how Project Kelvin can be used to promote Northern Ireland to potential overseas inward investment.

No request for funding has been received and Invest NI has no expectation of receiving such a request.

Project Kelvin

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the acquisition of land and the development of facilities by Hibernia Atlantic in (i) Derry City, (ii) Coleraine, and (iii) in any other locations, as part of Project Kelvin. (AQW 7227/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Hibernia Atlantic is currently progressing both the submarine and terrestrial aspects of Project Kelvin. It proposes to put forward a contract variation to the Department in respect of relocating the telehouse to Londonderry. All other aspects of the construction are proceeding as per the contract.

In particular at this point the company is actively negotiating with land owners regarding the location of the telehouse and the cable landing station. Sites for the other points of presence are also being considered and surveyed.

Project Kelvin

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to her answer to AQW 6603/09, (i) for an update on the progress of the variation to contract procedure to ensure the location of the Project Kelvin Telehouse in Derry City; and (ii) if a revised proposal has been submitted to her Department. (AQW 7229/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Hibernia Atlantic has been evaluating potential sites for the telehouse in Londonderry. Only when this work has been completed will the company be in a position to submit a contract variation proposal to the Department.

Once we receive a proposal it will be evaluated by both the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources and our technical advisors to ensure it meets the technical specification in the Kelvin contract.

Project Kelvin

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to her answer to AQW 6603/09, (i) for an update on the progress of the competition for the appointment of technical consultants to advise her Department on Project Kelvin, (ii) to indicate when such consultants are likely to be appointed; and (iii) what technical expertise is available to her Department for Project Kelvin, pending the outcome of the procurement exercise. (AQW 7230/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The tender for the appointment of technical consultants is being managed for the Department by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), Department of Finance and Personnel. The tender was advertised in the EU Official Journal and the CPD website on 10 April 2009. The closing date for tenders is the 19th of May 2009 and the evaluation of the tenders is scheduled to take place on the 26th (and if necessary 27th) of May 2009. At this time the bidders will be notified of the outcome. CPD allow 14 calendar days from notification of the award decision until the end of the mandatory standstill period before the

actual contract can be awarded (around 12 June 2009). This is a slight slippage from the original timetable of end May 2009.

The Department has appointed Offshore Marine Management to provide any technical advice on the submarine cable aspects of the project until the new consultants are in place.

In addition the Department can also call upon the services of engineers (including Civil, Mechanical and Electrical) in DFP (CPD) as required.

Energy Supply

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her Department's long-term vision for energy supply. (AQO 2570/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department's strategic aim is for a more sustainable energy system in which energy is used as efficiently as possible; where much more of our energy is from renewable sources; and where energy is as competitively priced as possible.

Reducing dependency on fossil fuels will increase Northern Ireland's security of supply and help meet the United Kingdom's commitments to the European Union's climate change targets.

Security of energy supply will be one of the key themes of the new Strategic Energy Framework. The draft Framework, which I hope to put out to consultation this summer, will set out how my Department plans to realise the vision for the benefit of all consumers.

Tourism in West Tyrone

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if her Department will promote, advertise and provide resources to develop tourism in the West Tyrone constituency, particularly in the Glenelly Valley area. (AQO 2572/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board works to promote and develop tourism right across Northern Ireland. To this end, NITB has just recently launched a major marketing campaign in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to raise the profile of Northern Ireland as a short break destination.

The campaign encourages people to explore more of what Northern Ireland has to offer and, within this, all of the key regions of Northern Ireland have featured. County Tyrone has received significant coverage as a result of this with Beaghmore Stones, Creggandevsky Court Tomb, The Ulster American Folk Park, Gortin Glen and An Creagan Visitor Centre among some of the attractions featured.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board will continue to work to promote and develop tourism in all areas of Northern Ireland.

In addition, DARD is making up to £12million available for tourism through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013.

Energy Efficiency in Agriculture

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what actions have been taken by her Department, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, to improve energy efficiency in agriculture. (AQO 2573/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: DETI has an overall co-ordinating role for energy efficiency within its energy policy remit. However, legislative powers in respect of energy efficiency are allocated across a number of Departments and Non-departmental Public Bodies in Northern Ireland.

I have, therefore, recently set up a Sustainable Energy Inter-departmental Working Group which will ensure that sustainable energy issues are dealt with strategically across Northern Ireland departments. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is represented on this group.

I have directed that a sub-group be set up specifically to look at energy efficiency, and the terms of reference for this group will be agreed shortly.

My Department continues to work with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on collaborative projects that impact on energy use in agriculture related areas. This work covers matters such as energy from waste projects and EU Directives, as appropriate.

Invest NI currently funds the Carbon Trust to provide advice and information on energy efficiency to the business sector, including agri-businesses that add value to primary agricultural activities.

Debt Advisory Services

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will ensure that any future enhancement of Debt Advisory Services will include the creation of services that are community based and accessible to those families and individuals most in need. (AQO 2574/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Additional funding secured by my Department will bring spending on debt advice to £1million per annum this year and will significantly enhance existing debt advice services. It is my intention that funding for extra face to face debt advisers will complement the existing service and will target sectors of society which are disadvantaged in their access to advice services.

Electricity Interconnector

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the opportunities that will arise from the new electricity interconnector between the island of Ireland and Wales, that was announced in March 2009 by the Energy Minister of the Republic of Ireland. (AQO 2575/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Irish Government's plan to build its first electricity interconnector between the Republic of Ireland and Wales by 2012 will improve regional interconnection capacity. It will be in addition to the existing Moyle interconnector between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The extra interconnection will help the long term integration of electricity markets into a regional France-UK-Ireland market under the European Internal Market Electricity Regional Initiative. This should improve security of supply, and enhance trading and competition between the Single Electricity Market and the larger Great Britain market.

Renewable Energy: Economic Opportunities

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assessment her Department has made of the long-term economic opportunities presented by renewable energy. (AQO 2576/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Energy and Environmental sector of the Northern Ireland economy currently employs approximately 4,500 people in 200 companies and has an estimated annual turnover of £300 million. This indicates that Northern Ireland has a solid base on which to build future development. Invest NI believes that growth in this sector will offer many opportunities for businesses involved in design, installation or manufacture of the component parts associated with a range of renewable energy technologies.

Invest NI is actively engaged with the Department for Energy and Climate Change, UK Renewables, UK Trade and Investment and the UK Renewables Deployment Group in the targeting of renewables as a growth sector. Invest NI is also developing a strategy to maximise the potential economic benefits of the sector and this is targeted for completion by the end of 2009.

Furthermore, the recently established Inter-Departmental Working Group on Sustainable Energy, which I chair, has set up a sub-group looking specifically at opportunities for 'green jobs' and skills development within Northern Ireland.

I believe that there is significant potential for 'green jobs' in Northern Ireland and that now is the right time to encourage investment in renewable energy technologies for the future. My Department will be consulting shortly

on a new Strategic Energy Framework. This will highlight how renewable energy technologies can help deliver security and diversity of energy supply, address climate change and create local employment opportunities.

Foreign Direct Investment Grants

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much money was allocated for foreign direct investment grants over the last three years; and how much of this has been spent. (AQO 2577/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In common with other Government Agencies and Departments, the total Invest NI budget has been allocated by DFP for the 2008/09 to 2010/11 period.

Within Invest NI, the budget is allocated to specific programmes in order to deliver on the objectives contained in its Corporate Plan.

Ultimately, the Budget allocation to each of Invest NI's operating divisions is based upon the following factors:

- Brought forward commitments; an estimation of the budget that is required to fund existing contractual commitments to client companies.
- Work in Progress; an assessment of the impact that current work in progress will have on budget allocations.
- New business; refers to the level of budget headroom available to fund programmes that deliver outputs in line with corporate targets.

The Budget is not, and never has been, allocated in terms of client company ownership and therefore no specific budget is allocated for foreign direct investment

I can confirm, however, that during the last three financial years for which final figures are available, that is 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08, Invest NI offered £84.8 million, £48.3 million and £54.6 million of assistance respectively to externally owned clients.

Invest NI accounts for grant expenditure according to the type of assistance provided to client companies, for example employment grants, capital grants, or research and development grants. Grant expenditure is not classified according to the mechanism by which the offer was secured and, consequently, expenditure information related to FDI projects is not currently available on this basis.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the situation facing the Presbyterian Mutual Society, what changes she plans to make to the regulation of mutual societies.(AQO 2578/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Both credit unions and industrial and provident societies are mutual societies.

The Inquiry by the Assembly's Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has considered options for the future regulation of credit unions in Northern Ireland. The Committee recently published its report setting out its recommendations. My Department's response endorsed the Committee's preferred option that registration of Northern Ireland credit unions should remain but that credit unions should be regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Regulation of Northern Ireland credit unions by the Financial Services Authority will ensure that the funds of all members are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

In addition, HM Treasury is presently conducting a review of all Northern Ireland mutuals, including industrial and provident societies. Among other things, the review will consider the position of Northern Ireland and Great Britain members in respect of the effectiveness of arrangements for depositor protection and the services that may be offered. The outcome of this review will also help inform how best to develop the legislative framework for the future regulation of both the credit unions and industrial and provident societies mutual sectors in Northern Ireland.

When the Treasury review has been completed and I have considered both reports in detail, I plan to bring forward proposals for the future regulation of Northern Ireland's mutuals but Financial Services Authority regulation will be for HM Treasury.

Economic Downturn

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she is taking to maintain growth in the current economic downturn. (AQO 2579/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: My Executive colleagues and I remain committed to providing support for businesses at this time, and the economic downturn continues to be a standing item on the agenda for Executive meetings.

In addition to the £44.5 million package of measures announced by the Executive on 15 December 2008, I established a sub-group of the Economic Development Forum to consider what further action could be taken. The sub-group, which was led by the private sector, made a number of recommendations which are currently under consideration.

More recently, I have established private-sector led sub-groups on exports and manufacturing, with a view to considering what further measures could be taken in these areas specifically.

This is in addition to the support already being provided by Invest NI. As you may be aware, Invest NI has established the Accelerated Support Fund to offer clients targeted assistance. Seminars are also being held for client and non-client companies to provide advice on how businesses can respond to the downturn.

My Department and the Executive will continue to do all that we can to support the economy through this difficult period.

Growth Areas

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which industries and industry segments are considered by her Department to be future growth areas that can be exploited by local companies. (AQO 2580/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: One of the key priority actions identified within Invest NI's 2008 - 2011 Corporate Plan is to shift Northern Ireland's sectoral focus towards high-value added economic activity.

A number of sectors are specifically identified as having significant growth potential - these include creative industries, life sciences, niche manufacturing, advanced materials, biotechnology and energy and environmental technology.

In terms of foreign direct investment, our efforts are concentrated on key sectors such as software development, ICT and financial services. We can increase Northern Ireland's capacity to compete at a global level for business in these sectors by emphasising both the sophistication of our product, process and procurement, and our research and design capabilities.

Of course, the global recession has meant that attracting such investments has become more difficult. In response to this, we are marketing Northern Ireland as a cost competitive location, emphasising key selling points such as our highly educated workforce, competitive operating costs, advanced telecoms infrastructure and excellent university / business linkages.

A key aspect of the work of MATRIX, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, has been to identify a number of global market opportunities where Northern Ireland companies have potential to achieve significant market share in the next two, five and ten years. These markets are "Clean and Green", "Safe and Secure", "Joined-up and Connected" and "health".

Specific niche opportunities were also identified across five sectors: Advanced Engineering, Information Technology, Life and Health Sciences, Advanced Materials and Agri-Food.

In terms of our indigenous business base, Invest NI's focus will continue to be on developing our locally owned companies into world leaders within the niche markets in which they operate. A number of our home-grown companies, such as Almac and Randox for example, have shown how to exploit their niche strengths to achieve significant global success.

Invest NI will continue to assist its local clients to improve their global competitiveness and, with a continued focus on capability and innovation development, we will ensure that our companies can successfully compete at a global level well into the next decade.

InterTradeIreland

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the priorities of Inter-Trade Ireland. (AQO 2581/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: InterTradeIreland's Vision is of a globally competitive enterprise environment in which Northern Ireland and Ireland co-operate to ensure the optimal utilisation of economic resources; particularly knowledge resources, to drive additional trade and wealth creation.

InterTradeIreland's Mission is to enhance the global competitiveness of the economy of both jurisdictions for mutual benefit; through co-operative business, policy and research programmes; partnerships and networks.

InterTradeIreland's strategic objectives, as stated in the Body's 2008 – 2010 Corporate Plan, are to:

- generate business value, by enhancing company competitiveness and capability through co-operative North/South initiatives; and
- to improve the competitive environment on the island, for mutual benefit, through co-operative policy research, reports and networks.

At present the Body's stated priority area is Science, Technology and Innovation, which aligns with the enterprise priorities of both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

It is clear that InterTradeIreland's priorities and activities link to and complement the Programme for Government's key strategic priority to 'grow a dynamic, innovative economy'.

Economic Development

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the contribution made by local enterprise companies to economic development. (AQO 2582/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Local Enterprise Agencies in Northern Ireland operate collectively as Enterprise Northern Ireland. At a local level, they operate on an individual basis with local stakeholders. Our local LEAs make a valuable contribution to economic development.

In terms of their current contribution, the 32 agency companies provide 2 million square feet of workspace at 42 locations across Northern Ireland and are managed by voluntary boards comprising over 300 local directors. The LEAs are, therefore, an important property resource and source of advice and information to local businesses.

For a number of years the LEAs have delivered the Start a Business Programme on behalf of Invest NI. In the 2008/09 year which has just ended, the Start a Business Programme, now replaced by Go for It, had 6,061 participants leading to 2,323 new business starts; which it is anticipated will generate up to 3,500 jobs. This clearly illustrates the significance of the network to local economic development.

I recently announced that Enterprise NI has been awarded the contract to deliver the Enterprise Development programme for Invest NI which includes the "Go for It" and "Growth" programmes. This will be the first time that one programme will provide an integrated range of guidance, signposting, training, mentoring and business clinics aimed at attracting more people into the entrepreneurial pipeline and accelerating their progression along it. The focus will be on building the skills and capabilities of the entrepreneur and in ensuring that those businesses capable of making a significant economic impact receive appropriate support.

In recognition of their importance, I have asked DETI and Invest NI, with Enterprise NI, to commission an independent review to identify how the agencies can maximise their contributions. This is particularly important given the current economic situation and in the context of the future implementation of the recommendations of the Review of Public Administration.

Economic Downturn

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her strategy on sectors to target in light of the global economic downturn. (AQO 2583/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: One of the key priority actions identified within Invest NI's 2008 - 2011 Corporate Plan is to shift Northern Ireland's sectoral focus towards high-value added economic activity.

A number of sectors are specifically identified as having significant growth potential - these include creative industries, life sciences, niche manufacturing, advanced materials, biotechnology and energy and environmental technology.

In terms of foreign direct investment, our efforts are concentrated on key sectors such as software development, ICT and financial services. We can increase Northern Ireland's capacity to compete at a global level for business in these sectors by emphasising both the sophistication of our product, process and procurement, and our research and design capabilities.

Of course, the global recession has meant that attracting such investments has become more difficult. In response to this, we are marketing Northern Ireland as a cost competitive location, emphasising key selling points such as our highly educated workforce, competitive operating costs, advanced telecoms infrastructure and excellent university / business linkages.

A key aspect of the work of MATRIX, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, has been to identify a number of global market opportunities where Northern Ireland companies have potential to achieve significant market share in the next two, five and ten years. These markets are "Clean and Green", "Safe and Secure", "Joined-up and Connected" and "health".

Specific niche opportunities were also identified across five sectors: Advanced Engineering, Information Technology, Life and Health Sciences, Advanced Materials and Agri-Food.

In terms of our indigenous business base, Invest NI's focus will continue to be on developing our locally owned companies into world leaders within the niche markets in which they operate. A number of our home-grown companies, such as Almac and Radox for example, have shown how to exploit their niche strengths to achieve significant global success.

Invest NI will continue to assist its local clients to improve their global competitiveness and, with a continued focus on capability and innovation development, we will ensure that our companies can successfully compete at a global level well into the next decade.

Investment Opportunities

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to create investment opportunities in areas of social need. (AQO 2584/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Executive is fully committed to tackling the issue of disadvantage in Northern Ireland, with my Department contributing to the delivery of Programme for Government targets that seek to encourage investment and employment opportunities in areas of economic and social need.

Within its 2008 - 2011 Corporate Plan, Invest NI is committed to ensuring that 70% of the new Foreign Direct Investment projects it secures are located within 10 miles of an area of economic and social disadvantage. In the longer term, the agency will also ensure that 75 percent of its future land bank acquisition is within these areas. Delivery of these targets will help address some of the barriers to employment that exist and allow residents of these areas to exploit the extensive opportunities that will be created.

My Department also leads on the development of the social economy in Northern Ireland. Social enterprises have the potential to bring significant positive impacts, particularly to disadvantaged groups and areas, and I will issue the Executive's updated Social Economy Strategy for public consultation shortly with the aim of having it agreed and published in the autumn.

Cross-Border Trade

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assessment she has made of the numbers of people crossing the border to shop in Northern Ireland and the benefits that this brings to traders. (AQO 2585/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Information on the total annual value of trade coming into Northern Ireland as a result of shopping by visitors from the Republic of Ireland is not collected via any official survey and therefore relevant figures are not available.

We do, however, continue to promote Northern Ireland as a key shopping destination. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board had a calendar of activity during 2008 that ensured exposure for Northern Ireland in the Republic of Ireland throughout the whole year. To this end, initial NITB estimates show that overnight visitor numbers from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland increased by 14% to 366,000 in 2008. Marketing activity in 2009 will be equally intense.

NITB launched an extensive spring campaign at the beginning of February 2009 in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The campaign features two new TV adverts as well as press advertising, outdoor, on-line and PR, and will continue the development of the new creative designs. There are also plans to promote Northern Ireland to Republic of Ireland residents who are already coming to Northern Ireland for the day to shop, to encourage them to extend their stay and take a short break. Exploiting the euro / sterling rate will be a key priority.

NITB is developing plans for a summer Gateway campaign and an autumn campaign to ensure consistent exposure for the Northern Ireland product in the Republic of Ireland.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Working Group on PPS21

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how the independent working group on PPS21 is to engage with the community and receive feedback from individuals and groups affected by the policy. (AQW 7011/09)

Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): The Independent Working was set up to fulfil the terms of reference which were agreed for it by the Executive Committee.

These terms of reference require it to (among other things) take account of views raised by consultees following publication of the emerging findings document and the publication of draft PPS 21.

The Independent Working Group is not required by its terms of reference to engage with the community or receive feedback.

Domestic Noise Pollution

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment if a review is being considered on the law on domestic noise pollution. (AQW 7086/09)

Minister of the Environment: Noise nuisance is one of a number of local environmental quality issues my officials have considered under the Clean Neighbourhoods agenda remit which aims to bring forward stronger and more effective legislation and guidance to help district councils to improve the environmental quality of our local neighbourhoods and public spaces throughout Northern Ireland.

The timescale for progressing the Clean Neighbourhoods agenda is, however, subject to competing priorities and resource constraints facing my Department. I am also conscious of the impact on Councils of the Review of Public Administration and our intention to implement the agreed structural reform package by 2011. In the circumstances I have decided to defer any further consideration of the Clean Neighbourhoods agenda and associated new primary legislation until 2011 by which time the structural reform package should be implemented and to allow my officials, in the meantime, to concentrate on higher priority environmental issues.

Domestic Noise Pollution

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many prosecutions there have been for domestic noise pollution, in each of the last five years. (AQW 7088/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Department of the Environment records the number of noise complaints received, and the legal action initiated, by each of the District Councils. This information is published annually by way of the Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland reports.

The table below shows the total number of complaints and prosecutions in each of the last five years for all 26 District Councils.

Period (1 April – 31 March)	Total no of complaints	Total no of prosecutions
2007/2008	11705	9
2006/2007	11923	8
2005/2006	11337	8
2004/2005	10047	17
2003/2004	8397	7

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Civil Service

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the level of absenteeism in the Civil Service; and what measures are being taken to reduce it. (AQW 6799/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): The level of absenteeism in each Department is set out in the attached table.. This reflects the outturn figures for the 2007/2008 financial year and the target rate for 2008/2009. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is currently working to analyse and validate the data for the 2008/2009 financial year as part of the preparation of its annual report, which is due in September.

Over recent months my officials have been working with Departments on the implementation of the various recommendations contained in the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and the subsequent report published by the Public Accounts Committee.

A senior level sub-group has been set up, under the chairmanship of the NICS Director of Personnel, to oversee and to drive forward the implementation of the various recommendations. Many of the recommendations will be for Departments and Agencies to implement, building on the work already underway. My Department will lead on policy work and any procedural changes that may be required.

The NICS plans to undertake a service-wide stress survey in May 2009, which will be based on the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards. A report is expected around September/October 2009. It is hoped that the survey will help to shape and inform future policy considerations in this area and will also identify problem areas where specific actions can be developed.

TABLE 1: WORKING DAYS LOST

Department	Average Number of Working Days Lost: 2007/2008	Target end of year rate - 2008/2009
DARD	10.9	8.5
DCAL	11.4	10.4
DE	11.8	8.5
DETI	7.4	8.5
DFP	11.5	9.3
DEL	13.7	11.5
DHSSPS	10.2	8.5

Department	Average Number of Working Days Lost: 2007/2008	Target end of year rate - 2008/2009
DOE	11.0	9.1
DRD	9.0	8.5
DSD	16.9	12.5
OFMDFM	9.7	8.5
NI Departments overall	12.9	10.2

Civil Service

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to his answer to AQW 3190/09, if he will provide an update on the (i) location; and (ii) number of vacancies in the Northern Ireland Civil Service for the positions of (a) Administrative Officer; (b) Executive Officer II; (c) Executive Officer I; and (d) Staff Officer in each government department. (AQW 6945/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The location and number of vacancies in permanent posts in each Northern Ireland Civil Service department at the grades of (a) Administrative Officer; (b) Executive Officer 2; (c) Executive Officer 1; and (d) Staff Officer are set out in the attached table.

VACANCIES (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT BASIS) IN THE ELEVEN NI DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR AGENCIES IN GRADES: AO; EO2; EO1; SO, AT 3 APRIL 2009

Department	AO		EO2		EO1		SO	
	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)
Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)	3	Belfast	3	Belfast	5	Belfast	2	Belfast(1), Armagh(1)
Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)	3	Belfast	0		0		2	Belfast
Education (DE)	1	Bangor	0		2	Bangor	0	
Employment & Learning (DEL) ¹	20	Belfast(6), Antrim(4), Armagh(1), Carrickfergus(1), Foyle(1), Larne(1), Limavady(2), Newcastle/Newry(1), Newry(3)	21	Belfast(10), Antrim(2), Armagh(1), Banbridge(1), Carrickfergus(2), Dungannon(1), Larne(1), Newry(3)	28.5	Belfast(28), Limavady(0.5)	9	Belfast(8), Carrickfergus(1)
Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI)	7	Belfast	1	Belfast	7.7	Belfast(6.7), Omagh(1)	1	Belfast
Finance & Personnel (DFP) ²	32	Belfast(30), Craigavon(1), Londonderry(1)	15	Belfast	21	Belfast	24	Belfast(16), Bangor(6), Lisburn(1), Londonderry(1)
Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS)	0		5	Belfast	3	Belfast	2	Belfast

Department	AO		EO2		EO1		SO	
	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)
Environment (DOE)	13	Belfast(1.5), Coleraine(9), Downpatrick(1.5), Enniskillen(1)	6	Belfast(5), Coleraine(1)	20	Belfast(16), Coleraine(3), Londonderry(1)	12	Belfast(8), Armagh(1), Ballymena(1), Coleraine(2)
Regional Development (DRD)	20	Belfast(1), Ballymena(6), Coleraine(2), Craigavon(3), Downpatrick(4), Enniskillen(1), Omagh(2), Newry(1)	16	Belfast(9), Ballymena(5), Coleraine(1), Downpatrick(1)	12	Belfast(10), Antrim(1), Ballymena(1)	12	Belfast(8), Ballymena(3), Craigavon(1)
Social Development ³ (DSD)	66.9	Belfast(56.6), Ballymoney(2), Banbridge(0.7), Limavady(1), Magherafelt(1), Newtownabbey(1), Portadown(4.6)	74.3	Belfast(61.8), Bangor(0.9), Downpatrick(1.5), Limavady(1), Londonderry(6.5), Newcastle(1.1), Newtownards(0.5), Portadown(1)	48.2	Belfast(38), Armagh(0.7), Coleraine(2), Cookstown(1), Downpatrick(0.2), Dungannon(0.6), Enniskillen(1), Londonderry(3), Newry(1.7)	29.6	Belfast(28.4), Londonderry(0.2), Newtownards(1)
Office of the First & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)	4	Belfast	3	Belfast	4	Belfast	2	Belfast(1) Armagh(1)
Total	169.9		144.3		151.4		95.6	

¹ DEL: Figures provided are at 6 April 2009

² DFP: Figures provided are at 1 April 2009

³ DSD: Figures provided are at 3 April 2009 except: Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division, latest figures available at 20 March 2009.

Industrial Rates

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much revenue is lost annually by capping industrial rates at 30%. (AQW 7024/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: If industrial derating is completely removed from the manufacturing sector, then the annual revenue that would be raised is estimated to be £66m (at the current level of the regional rate). Capping at 30% therefore represents an annual revenue loss of about £46m.

These figures represent a loss to the Assembly because district councils are fully compensated for the revenue forgone through the derating element of the general grant.

Furthermore, these figures represent maximum amounts because it is not unreasonable to assume that the imposition of full rates on some manufacturing firms, particularly during this economic downturn, would have threatened their future viability.

EU Funding Available to NGOs

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what mechanisms are in place in the (i) EU unit; and (ii) Anti-Poverty Unit for providing details of EU funding available to NGO's. (AQW 7084/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Each of Northern Ireland's four European Structural Fund Programmes has a designated Managing Authority that is responsible for, among other things, providing advice and information of the available funding opportunities, including to NGOs.

Programme Managing Authorities are detailed in the attached table.

Programme	Managing Authority
European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)
European Social Fund Programme	Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)
PEACE III Programme	Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
INTERREG IVA Cross Border Co-operation Programme	Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

Note:

It is a requirement that Managing Authorities publish details of all projects supported by the EU Programmes.

Civil Service

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he can give assurances that there will be a final settlement on the Civil Service pay dispute, following three months postponement due to the review of the TG1 and TG11 grades. (AQW 7127/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There is no three month postponement to the process of resolving the NICS equal pay issue. I have instructed my officials to work intensively with the trade union to establish as clearly as possible the parameters within which a negotiated settlement might be possible on this issue. The review of TGI and TGII grades will be an important part of that framework and with the cooperation of both the union and staff it is intended to complete this as quickly as possible. It remains my aim to resolve this issue without the need for litigation, the process for which has already been initiated by the union.

Review of Public Sector Posts

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he is taking or plans to take, as a result of the Review of Public Sector posts, to ensure that East Antrim receives a share of jobs that will address its position at the bottom of all constituencies. (AQW 7215/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I have recently circulated a paper to Executive Ministers containing proposals on the matter of location of public sector jobs, which I hope will be scheduled shortly for discussion at an Executive meeting. Any decisions on the way forward will be a matter for the Executive.

Reform and Reinvestment Initiative

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if the Executive has utilised the borrowing powers that existed under the Reform and Reinvestment Initiative. (AQW 7286/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I can confirm that the borrowing power under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative has been utilised by the Executive since the restoration of devolution in May 2007.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

New Hospital in Omagh

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the tender process for the new local enhanced hospital in Omagh will be complete; and when works are due to commence. (AQW 6521/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The procurement of the new enhanced hospital in Omagh has been paused to facilitate a review of the business case, including the procurement method. As a consequence of the current uncertainties in financial markets, I consider it appropriate to review whether PFI remains the most appropriate option for this project in terms of affordability and value for money. Once this review has been completed, I will be better placed to advise on the timing of completion of the tender process and commencement of works.

Assessment by External Service Providers

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Health Service patients that were assessed by external service providers, within the past two years, required subsequent treatment; and how many received it. (AQW 7028/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of Health Service patients that were assessed by external service providers, within the past two years, and that required or received subsequent treatment is not available.

Foyle Health and Social Services Trust

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail what measures have been put in place in the Foyle Health and Social Services Trust area since 2007 to ensure that suitable care packages are available for all patients seen by external contractors. (AQW 7030/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Western Health and Social Care Trust, which subsumed the Foyle Health and Social Services Trust in April 2007, has advised that a number of measures are in place to ensure that all service users whose care is delivered by an independent sector provider, receive high quality care packages which meet each service user's need. These measures include;

- Legally binding contracts with independent providers which include a detailed service delivery specification. This places a requirement on providers to:
 - Continuously monitor the service they have been commissioned to deliver;
 - Report immediately any change in the clients condition or circumstances;
 - Report any occasion where care is not delivered and the reason for it;
 - Routinely conduct service user satisfaction surveys and visits as a quality assurance requirement.
- In addition, all aspects of the contract specification are also monitored by the Trust in a number of ways, including a formal review of each service user's care plan, the monitoring of all agency providers by the Trust contracts monitoring officer and the monitoring of complaint and incidents received by each provider agency.

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6760/09, to supply the follow up audit to the 25 November 2008 hygiene reports for Theatre 1, including the comment sheet. (AQW 7061/09)

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

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6759/09, to supply the weekly hygiene reports for Theatre 1 Royal Victoria Hospital from 8 December 2008 to 20 April 2009. (AQW 7062/09)

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

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6760/09, when he will supply hygiene reports for January and February 2009 for ward 4F of the Royal Victoria Hospital. (AQW 7063/09)

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

Family Support Workers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6459/09, (i) to clarify his use of the term 'deployment'; and (ii) if additional duties will be required from family support workers on top of their existing responsibilities. (AQW 7077/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) By 'deployment', the Trust is referring to the realignment of the workers across the Southern Trust Family Support Social Work Teams. This process is progressing in full consultation and engagement with the staff in question, the Personnel department and staff side representatives.
- (ii) There are no plans for additional duties to be required from the family support workers.

Emergency Referrals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many emergency referrals outside normal working hours, have been handled by social workers in the Armagh and Dungannon area, in each of the last three years, broken down by area. (AQW 7079/09)

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

Armagh Hospitals

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will visit (i) Mullinure; (ii) Longstone; and (iii) St Luke's Hospitals, Armagh, as a matter of priority. (AQW 7143/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I visited Longstone Hospital on 11 March this year and hope to visit the other hospitals in the future.

I am aware of the concerns of Members from the Armagh area about the Southern Trust's proposals for these hospitals and had planned to meet them on 27 April. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances that meeting had to be cancelled. I hope to meet with these Members in the future to discuss their concerns.

Childhood Diabetes

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 5968/09, to confirm if officials in his Department are unaware of the findings published from 1989 onwards in relation to childhood diabetes, given that this information has since been provided to me through Queens University. (AQW 7176/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A multitude of data and research exist, external to my Department, of varying quality and completeness. In this particular instance, my officials had only just been made aware of the diabetes register maintained by Queen's University but, given that it is voluntary in nature, had no information at the time as to its coverage or reliability. This was only received subsequent to my responding to your question, and showed that the register was up-to-date and had been subject to a validation exercise up until 2003. Whilst I would not be in a position to directly guarantee the quality of the data derived from this source, I am content to highlight it in response to future similar questions.

The Woodland Trust

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has to work with The Woodland Trust to create woodland and green open space areas on hospital sites to help with the mental and physical well-being of patients. (AQW 7234/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has recently commissioned the development of guidance to help Health and Social Care organisations establish the range and remit for organisations such as the Woodland Trust and other voluntary organisations to become involved in protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the HSC Estate as an integral part of enhancing the wellbeing of patients.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

M5 Safety Barrier at Greencastle

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to explain the purpose (i) of the safety barrier on the country bound lane of the M5 at Greencastle to Gideon's Green; and; (ii) of the two short sections of safety barrier between Gideon's Green and the end of the M5 at Hazelbank. (AQW 7051/09)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): Firstly, I should explain that the primary aim of a safety barrier is to protect vehicle occupants from potential collision with hazards adjacent to the carriageway. In addition to this, it also protects members of the public from the possible consequences of a vehicle leaving the carriageway.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that in relation to the safety barrier on the country bound section of the M5 at Greencastle to Gideons Green, there are in effect two sections of road restraint system. The first short section of safety barrier protects vehicle occupants from a motorway telecommunications cabinet. The second, longer section, serves a number of purposes. The majority of the second section protects vehicle occupants from a water hazard adjacent to the motorway, while the remainder of the second section, protects vehicle occupants from motorway telecommunications cabinets and an electronic message sign.

With regard to the two short sections of safety barrier, between Gideon's Green and Hazelbank, on the country-bound section of the M5, I am advised that the first section protects vehicle occupants from a parapet at a subway under the motorway, while the second section protects vehicle occupants from both a parapet, at a second subway, and motorway telecommunications cabinets.

Removal of Emblems

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to the answer to AQW 6780/09, what assessment he has made of whether the Police Service of Northern Ireland is the appropriate body to remove sectarian symbols from lamp standards, which depict groups responsible for attacks on security forces. (AQW 7073/09)

Minister for Regional Development: In my previous answer to the Member I explained that my Department's Roads Service has signed up to the Joint Protocol on the Display of Flags in Public Areas. Until that protocol is reviewed, it is the responsibility of all the partner organisations to fulfil their designated responsibilities.

Within the protocol a key responsibility of the PSNI is to support partners and where best placed, to take forward consultation and negotiation with local community representatives where the display of flags is an issue.

Roads Service's key responsibility, when called upon by a lead Agency, is to provide support facilities, such as Mobile Extendable Working Platforms, where there has been agreement with the local community representatives to remove flags.

Removal of Emblems

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to confirm if staff within his Department have refused to remove sectarian emblems from lamp standards. (AQW 7075/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Under the terms of the Joint Protocol on the Display of Flags in Public Areas, my Department's Roads Service is responsible for providing support facilities to the lead Agency in the removal of any flags that has been agreed with the local community.

The Joint Protocol states that, "Whichever agency is placed in the most effective position to consult, negotiate or resolve situations, will take the lead and will be supported by the other partners within their remit and specialism. Where the display is one that is causing community tension or is affecting the quality of life for a community, then the police will take the lead".

I am advised that there have been no incidents of Roads Service staff declining requests for the provision of such support.

Speed Limits Outside Schools

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development if he would consider introducing 20 mph speed limits outside all schools. (AQW 7076/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As the Member is already aware two schools were selected for trials of 20mph variable speed limits. These were:

- Kilmoyle Primary School, Benvardin Road, Ballymoney; and
- Hazlett Primary School, Downhill Road, Articlave, Castlerock.

The schemes became operative on Monday 1 September 2008, and my Department's Roads Service will continue to monitor and assess these schemes over the full school year, to determine their effectiveness in reducing traffic speeds and other dangers. After this period, consideration will be given to introducing a more widespread programme.

However, I should explain that the part-time 20mph pilot schemes are expensive to install and maintain. It would therefore be inappropriate to roll out further schemes until the costs and benefits have been properly established and compared with those of other measures, that Roads Service is already using, to address sites with known safety problems.

It should be noted that Roads Service has already invested considerable efforts by installing engineering measures, including prominent signing and road markings, to warn approaching drivers about the presence of vulnerable road users, such as children, around schools. In relation to this issue, Roads Service will continue to seek ways to reduce the dangers to children on their journey to and from schools.

Road Safety

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will (i) review road safety in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing in the centre of Killyleagh; and (ii) take whatever measures are necessary to maximise safety. (AQW 7099/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is aware of concerns expressed by members of the public in using the zebra crossing in Killyleagh.

Although advance warning signs and high friction surfacing have been installed to highlight driver's awareness of the crossing, it would appear that public fears persist.

There may be a problem with the correct use of the crossing by pedestrians, in that they should stand at the crossing to show intent to cross, and wait for vehicles to stop before proceeding.

However, I have asked Roads Service to take your concerns on board and for the crossing to be monitored to determine if any other problems are present.

Half Fare Smart Pass

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of whether charging a Translink Half Fare SmartPass holder the cost of a return ticket which is the value of two single tickets (i) equates with the normal practice of a return fare sold at a discounted price; (ii) infringes Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 by distinguishing between passengers paying the full and half price fare to the financial detriment of the Translink Half Fare SmartPass holder; and (iii) is compatible with creating equality for people with disabilities. (AQW 7111/09)

Minister for Regional Development: In facilitating the purchase of return tickets the Department has made a reasonable adjustment to assist people with disabilities. However, the concessionary fares scheme has been set up and is operated and audited on the basis that it is the full single fare that is being discounted. As regards the equality aspects of your question, I would refer you to my reply to you of 7 April 2009 (AQW 6848/09 refers).

Gortcorbies Climbing Lane Project

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has been given to utilising the disused quarry, adjacent to the A37 Limavady to Coleraine Road, as a site for disposal of spoil from the planned Gortcorbies climbing lane project. (AQW 7112/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has examined three opportunities to dispose of surplus material from the proposed Gortcorbies Climbing Lane on the Coleraine to Derry A37 road:

- in the disused gravel pit at the top of Keady mountain;
- in the quarry at Keady Road; and
- on farmland at Drumalief Road.

I can advise that an environmental assessment of the disused gravel pit at Keady mountain records that it has regressed to an 'area of higher quality habitat' with several ponds inhabited by newts. This excludes the gravel pit as a location for surplus material.

As regards the second option, early contact with the quarry owner indicated that he would be content to allow disposal of some surplus material in the quarry on two conditions: (i) the price was acceptable; and (ii) that it did not compromise future mineral extraction, as the quarry at Keady Road has extant planning permission for mineral extraction. This opportunity remains, subject to cost.

I can also advise that discussions have taken place with a landowner with a view to improving some 15 acres of land at Drumalief Road. Whilst this could have accommodated the estimated 100,000m³ of surplus material, subsequent legislation has since been introduced which prohibits the disposal or placing of inert material on 'greenfield' land.

As I advised in my reply to your recent question (AQW 6575/09), environmental and design assessments will assist with the selection of a cost effective scheme, which best fits the topography and the environment. A vital part of this assessment process will be the appropriate disposal of the surplus material from construction of the scheme.

However, the situation remains that some, or all, of the surplus material may have to be disposed of in licensed tips, remote from the Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and this would add considerably to construction costs.

Speed Limits

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what contact there has been with Westminster about proposals to reduce some speed limits in England to 20 mph. (AQW 7119/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise the Member that there has been no direct contact with Westminster on proposals to reduce some speed limits in England to 20 mph. However, my Department's Roads Service is aware of the recently published Department for Transport's consultation document entitled, "A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World." This document sets out proposals, for targets and measures, for improving road safety in Britain for the period beyond 2010.

The recent public consultation completed by Roads Service, on the setting of speed limits in the North, contains guidance, including specific proposals, on the situations where the 30mph speed limit in urban areas may be altered to introduce a 20 mph limits or zones, for example, where there are particular risks to vulnerable road users.

Resurfacing Footpaths in Mid-Ulster

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding has been allocated for (i) repairing; and (ii) resurfacing footpaths in Mid Ulster. (AQW 7126/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not record expenditure on a constituency basis. I should explain that Roads Service's budget is allocated to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds.

The combined areas of Magherafelt and Cookstown Districts represent approximately 80% of Mid Ulster and the total expenditure on the items in those Districts in 2008/09 was: (i) £112k, and (ii) £92k. (The combined total of £204k represents 7.6% of the Structural Maintenance expenditure in the two areas.)

Traffic Management Survey

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development when the traffic management survey in Comber will (i) commence; and (ii) be completed. (AQW 7128/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The traffic management survey for Comber commenced in January 2009, and a preliminary report should be available by the end of May 2009.

Pot Holes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures his Department is taking to fix pot holes in and around the Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, Donaghadee. (AQW 7154/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Road Service has advised that the carriageway and footways in the Beechfield and Ashfield estates, in Donaghadee, are inspected every four months in accordance with its Road Maintenance Standards. The most recent inspection, on 8 April 2009, identified some actionable defects in the Ashfield estate. I understand that some of the defects have already been repaired, while the others are awaiting repair within the target response time.

With regard to Beechfield estate, there were no actionable defects identified during the last inspection.

Chevron Markings

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if Roads Service intends to introduce experimental chevron markings on the motorway network to assist drivers to maintain the two second rule recommended in the Highway Code. (AQW 7200/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I am advised that initial research on the motorway network in Britain has shown that separation chevrons and associated signs have been effective at reducing the number of shunt, and loss of control collisions, and that they continue to influence driver behaviour for several miles beyond the zones. Further research is now underway to increase the evidence base and to look at other methods, such as interactive variable message signs, for reducing the risks on densely trafficked roads.

My Department's Roads Service is fully aware of these measures and is awaiting the outcome of the above studies, before deciding whether to proceed with such a system here. There are concerns that the road markings themselves can be a distraction, as drivers may focus more of their attention on trying to maintain a safe distance, rather than looking out for dangers ahead. As the chevrons are set for a car travelling at 70 mph in ideal conditions, Roads Service also has reservations that drivers may think that they would be maintaining a safe distance, regardless of their speed and local weather conditions.

A review of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy is currently underway and it will give consideration to this, and other initiatives and suggestions put forward to further reduce the level of road casualties here.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes are waiting for Warm Home Scheme grants in (i) Lisburn; and (ii) Dromore. (AQW 7136/09)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): In Lisburn (Postcode areas BT27 and BT28) there are 116 applications to the Warm Homes Scheme waiting for assistance with measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

In Dromore (Postcode area BT25) there are 37 applications to the Warm Homes Scheme waiting for assistance with measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of homes waiting for Warm Homes Scheme grants in North Down. (AQW 7180/09)

Minister for Social Development: In the North Down Council area there are 140 applications to the Warm Homes Scheme waiting to be surveyed and 22 applications which have been surveyed and are waiting for measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes to be installed.

Registered Carers

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many registered carers are over 60 years of age. (AQW 7188/09)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is not available as my Department does not hold a list of registered carers.

Housing Executive

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development to confirm if land owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the Latt Crescent area, off the main Newry/Armagh Road, have been sold, or are in the process of, being sold for development. (AQW 7228/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive owns land at Armagh Road adjacent to Latt Crescent. This site is currently on the market for sale with an offer from an interested party to develop it and negotiations are ongoing.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Events on the Stormont Estate

Mr G Savage asked the Assembly Commission if it has received any requests for events to take place on the grounds of Stormont Estate between April and September 2009. (AQW 5742/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): The grounds of Stormont Estate are under the control of the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Assembly Commission is aware that the Department of Finance and Personnel intends to hold a “Family Fun Day” in the grounds of Stormont Estate on Monday 25th May 2009. To facilitate this event, Parliament Buildings will be open to Members of the public for tours and refreshments.

Accommodation Audit

Mr A Attwood asked the Assembly Commission whether the staff who conducted the accommodation audit were Assembly staff or if their services were acquired from another agency; and to confirm the staff costs involved in the conduct of the audit. (AQW 6605/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): The strategic accommodation review project is being managed by architects from Central Procurement Directorate of DFP with specialist support from a workplace strategy consultant.

Although no fees have been paid to date, the estimated cost for the professional fees for the project is £40k.

The staff who carried out the space utilisation study are civil servants belonging to Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The estimated cost of this element of the work is £12k which includes the space utilisation study, interviews conducted with building users and the preparation of a report.

The Project Team are expected to present their main findings and recommendations to the Assembly Commission at the end of April 2009 with the final report to follow in mid-May. At that stage the project costs will be finalised.

Assembly Roadshows

Mr D McKay asked the Assembly Commission how many people attended each of the Assembly Roadshows. (AQW 7164/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Moutray): The total number of people attending was 607. This has been broken down below.

Roadshow	No. of attendees
Parliament Buildings	80
Coleraine	48
Ballymena	36
Newry	30
Enniskillen	36
Armagh	59
Derry/Londonderry	95
Omagh	68
Lisburn	37
Belfast	118

REVISED WRITTEN ANSWERS

Friday 1 May 2009
Written Answer Booklet of 27 March 2009
(Volume 39, No WA3)

In page WA289, replace the answer to question (AQW 6458/09) with;

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS (I) ON CONTRACTS; AND (II) NOT ON CONTRACTS IN THE SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST BROKEN DOWN BY AREA AS AT MARCH 2009.

Trust Area	Number of Family Support Workers on a contract		Number of Family Support Workers not on a contract	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Armagh & Dungannon Locality	0	0.0	8	125 hours per week in total on average
Newry & Mourne Locality	1	1.0	0	0.0
Craigavon & Banbridge Locality	2	2.0	0	0.0

Source: Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Notes:

1. WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent.
 2. There is currently one vacancy (0.5 WTE) in the Craigavon & Banbridge locality for a Contracted Family Support Worker.
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