
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 18 September 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Section 10

Mr D Kennedy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action is being taken to improve the Department's compliance with Section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act. (AQW 17/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Section 10 of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in providing responses to FOI requests within the statutory time frame. The Department has an excellent track record in dealing with information requests since the introduction of FOI legislation in January 2005. Although OFMDFM has experienced significant year-on-year increases in the number of requests received, we have nevertheless responded to 94% of the 566 requests received to date within the statutory time frame (including extensions permitted under section 10(3) of the FOI Act).

The Department has a number of arrangements in place to ensure continuous improvement in its FOI performance. This includes allocating a senior official as the Senior Responsible Owner for each FOI request, weekly reports to us on all departmental FOI cases, oversight scrutiny of performance by the Departmental Board and the provision of guidance and support on the proper application of exemptions by the departmental Information Management Unit. In addition, all requests are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with FOI legislation, including section 10 compliance.

To date, the Department has achieved an impressive performance in providing responses to FOI requests within the statutory time frame and expects to maintain and indeed improve its levels of performance in the future.

Central Freedom of Information Team

Mr D Kennedy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an outline of the recent reports issued by the Central Freedom of Information Team on trends and significant developments in FOI. (AQW 19/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Central Freedom of Information Team produces a number of reports on behalf of all Departments. This includes an Annual Report and quarterly reports which focus on the performance of the Departments in complying with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and which are published on the OFMDFM website. The Annual Report for 2008 and the report for quarter one of 2009 are the latest available.

Monthly reports are also produced for our information and copied to Executive colleagues. They incorporate an executive summary which notes any significant trends and also policy or casework developments, a list of significant requests, and a statistical summary. The report for July 2009 is the most recent we have seen.

Ministerial Code

Mr G Savage asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to clarify who has statutory authority to deal with alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code. (AQW 27/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Section 28A of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Ministers to act in accordance with the provisions of the Ministerial Code and any alleged breach of the Code could therefore be decided as a matter of law.

Under various provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, failure by a Minister to observe any of the terms of the Pledge of Office, as set out in paragraph 1.4 of the Ministerial Code, may be the subject of a motion for a resolution of the Assembly for the purposes of:

- the exclusion of a Minister from office (Section 30)
- the reduction of a Minister's salary (Section 47A)
- the censure of a Minister (Section 51D)

Any such motion cannot be moved unless:

- (a) it is supported by at least 30 members of the Assembly; or
- (b) it is moved by the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly; or
- (c) it is moved by the Presiding Officer in pursuance of a notice from the Secretary of State.

In addition, such resolutions cannot be passed by the Assembly without cross-community support.

Internal Consultancy

Mr P McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to define 'internal consultancy' and what guidelines are in place for its use by Departments. (AQW 44/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Internal consultancy describes advice, expertise and services provided to the Department by another department or agency within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Examples of internal consultancy services used by OFMDFM include business consultancy services provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) Delivery and Innovation Division (DID), research and analysis undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), and professional procurement services and support provided by DFP's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD).

DFP guidance on the Use of Consultants, which has been revised to incorporate recommendations made by the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee in November 2007, is applied by OFMDFM in all proposals to engage internal or external consultants. In the first instance, Departmental or NICS skills and resources are utilised by OFMDFM, where available, to undertake new areas of work or to provide expert advice and services.

Strict controls are operated over the management of all consultancy assignments, including the appointment of an individual or team to manage each assignment, careful monitoring of agreed interim milestones and targets, and the completion of Post-Project Evaluations (PPEs) to ensure that the objectives of the assignment have been met and lessons learned. All consultancy assignments are rigorously managed to ensure costs are controlled, objectives are met in full, and that an effective skills transfer takes place.

The use of internal consultants delivers value for money, and ensures that Departmental and NICS skills and resources are fully utilised and exploited. All consultancy spend is directly related to the delivery of OFMDFM's obligations and commitments in the Programme for Government 2008-11.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what percentage of the site-specific objections to the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan could, or should, have been addressed through written representation procedures rather than by any form of hearing. (AQW 116/10)

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 Questions.

The Planning Appeals Commission received 4,257 objections to the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, 5,017 objections to the draft Magherafelt Area Plan and 1,590 objections to the draft Bandridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan.

The Commission does not have the resources to examine all the above individual objections to establish what percentage of the thousands of site-specific objections could, or should, have been addressed through the Written Representation procedure.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

Magherafelt Area Plan

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what percentage of the site-specific objections to the draft Magherafelt Area Plan could, or should, have been addressed through written representation procedures rather than by any form of hearing. (AQW 117/10)

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 Questions.

The Planning Appeals Commission received 4,257 objections to the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, 5,017 objections to the draft Magherafelt Area Plan and 1,590 objections to the draft Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan.

The Commission does not have the resources to examine all the above individual objections to establish what percentage of the thousands of site-specific objections could, or should, have been addressed through the Written Representation procedure.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what percentage of the site-specific objections to the draft Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan could, or should, be addressed through written representation procedures rather than by any form of hearing. (AQW 118/10)

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 Questions.

The Planning Appeals Commission received 4,257 objections to the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, 5,017 objections to the draft Magherafelt Area Plan and 1,590 objections to the draft Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan.

The Commission does not have the resources to examine all the above individual objections to establish what percentage of the thousands of site-specific objections could, or should, have been addressed through the Written Representation procedure.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given that the Planning Appeals Commission committed itself to capturing the relevant data commencing from 1st April 2009, what percentage of appeals received from that date are being addressed by informal hearing and does the Commission believe these could, or should be, addressed through written representation procedures rather than by any form of hearing. (AQW 119/10)

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.

The Planning Appeals Commission received 187 appeals during the period 01 April 2009 to 31 August 2009. In response, the Commission wrote to 79 (42%) of these appellants suggesting that their appeal could be best determined by the exchange of Written Submissions, without either an Informal Hearing or an Accompanied Site Visit which had been requested.

Of the 187 appellants, 64 had requested Informal Hearings. The Commission wrote to 36 of these suggesting that oral proceedings were unnecessary.

Of the 187 appeals received from 01 April 2009, 38 (20%) are now following 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 ”

New IT systems

Mr S Hamilton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) all new IT systems installed within their Department in the last 5 years; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date. (AQW 127/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: All new IT systems installed within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in the last five years are shown in the table below.

Year	System Name	Initial Budget	Actual Cost	Estimated Start Date	Actual Start Date
2005/06	None				
2006/07	None				
2007/08	None				
2008/09	ChARM – business planning system	£4900	£4900	Aug 08	Aug 08
2009/10	Departmental and Business Area Business Planning Systems – developed from ChARM	£4800	£4800	Jul 09/ Sep 09	Jul 09/ Sep 09

The list excludes NICS-wide systems (the reform programme and IT Assist-led infrastructural systems) installed in the Department of Finance and Personnel or in IT service provider premises during the period.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Board of Library's NI

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for the names and political party affiliation of Councillors appointed by him or his predecessors to the Board of Library's NI. (AQW 130/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): Eleven Councillors, details as listed in the attached annex, were appointed to the Board of the Northern Ireland Library Authority (Libraries NI) on 1 August 2009.

Nelson McCausland MLA

Annex

Name	Engaged in Political Activity in the Last Five Years for;
Mrs. Anne Brolly	Sinn Fein
Mr. Charlie Casey	Sinn Fein

Name	Engaged in Political Activity in the Last Five Years for;
Mr. Samuel Cole	DUP
Mrs. Roberta Dunlop	UUP
Mr. Allan Ewart	DUP
Ms. Carla Lockhart	DUP
Mr. Patrick Cathal Mullaghan	SDLP
Mr. Hubert Nicholl	DUP
Ms. Evelyne Robinson	DUP
Mr. Jim Rodgers	UUP
Mr. James Ignatius (Seamus) Shields	SDLP

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Free School Milk

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children in (i) nursery schools; (ii) primary schools; (iii) secondary and grammar schools; and (iv) special needs were in receipt of (a) free school milk; and (b) school milk at a cost as they did not qualify for free school milk, at the start of the academic year 2009/10. (AQW 24/10)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): The figures requested showing the number of pupils taking milk in the 2009/10 academic year are not yet available.

However, under my Department's Milk and Meals Arrangements free school milk is provided to;

- all pupils at special schools,
- pupils in nursery and primary schools who do not have access to school meals, and
- individual nursery and primary school pupils where it is deemed necessary in the interests of their health.

All pre-school children are eligible for free milk under the DHSSPS's Day Care Food Scheme. In addition, drinking milk must be available every day as an option with school meals. There is no accurate way of measuring how many choose to buy milk with their school meal.

Tá liostaithe thíos na figiúirí is deireanaí atá ar fáil ó na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, a thaispeánann líon na ndaltaí a bhí ag fáil bainne i mí Meithimh 2009.

I have listed below the latest available figures, supplied by the Education and Library Boards, which show the number of pupils taking milk as at June 2009.

	Free	Paid
Nursery	8,979	0
Primary	192	37,357
Secondary And Grammar	0	0
Special	3,491	0

Psychology Students

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Education if all psychology students who obtained their doctorates in the academic year 2008/09 have now taken up posts with the various Education and Library Boards. (AQW 26/10)

Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne (ELBanna) gur ceapadh gach duine den dáréag a chuir Dochtúireacht i Síceolaíocht an Oideachais, an Pháiste agus an Ógánaigh (DECAP) i gcrích sa bhliain acadúil 2008/09, gur ceapadh chuig poist lánaimseartha leis na ELBanna iad mar seo a leanas:

The Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that all twelve trainees who completed a Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) in the academic year 2008/09 have been appointed to full-time posts with ELBs as follows:

	Permanent	Temporary
BELB	1	2
SEELB	0	3
WELB	5	1

Of the above seven have already taken up their new posts, two are hoping to do so shortly and three are finalising their doctorates in the near future.

All entrants to the DECAP course are required to sign an undertaking agreeing to apply for posts in the ELBs for a period of two years following completion of their qualification and, if successful in their application, to work for a Board for a period of two years. If they fail to do so without reasonable excuse, the ELBs will take steps to recover all or part (depending on the circumstances of the case) of the course fees and bursaries paid to the trainee.

Irish Medium Post Primary Schools

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils enrolled in Irish medium post primary schools in each of the last three years including 2009/10. (AQW 28/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh leagtha amach sna táblaí thíos. Ní bheidh fáil ar shonraí rollaithe don scoilbhliain 2009/10 go dtí go gcríochnófar an daonáireamh scoile níos moille i mbliana.

The information requested is set out in the tables below. Enrolment data for 2009/10 will not be available until completion of the school census later in the year.

(AQW 28/10) PUPILS ENROLLED AT GRANT-AIDED IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2006/07 – 2008/09

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Coláiste Feirste	489	506	513

(AQW 33/10) PUPILS ENROLLED AT GRANT-AIDED IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2006/07 – 2008/09

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	65	71	69
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	303	294	297
Gaelscoil Na Bhfál	213	211	211
Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh	176	168	180
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	134	119	99
Scoil An Droichid	89	103	125
Gaelscoil An Damba	27	29	0
Gaelscoil Na Móna	66	72	86
Gaelscoil An Lonnáin	44	44	51
Bunscoil Cholmcille	163	159	161
Gaelscoil Uí Dhocartaigh	117	130	131

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	116	135	128
Bunscoil An Traonaigh	22	27	31
Gaelscoil Na Gcrann	38	45	50
Bunscoil An Chastil	71	75	77
Gaelscoil Na Speiríní	21	23	24
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	n.a	19	30
Gaelscoil Éanna	n.a	12	26
Scoil Na Fuisgeoige	134	133	119
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	54	48	58
Bunscoil An Iúir	84	102	104
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	104	113	126
Total	2,041	2,132	2,183

Source: School census

Notes:

1. Enrolment figures include pupils in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes where applicable.
2. Figures exclude pupils who are enrolled in Irish medium units.
3. 'n.a.' is "not applicable" as the school existed as an independent school.

Irish Medium Primary Schools

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education to list all Irish medium primary schools by parliamentary constituency in each of the last five years including 2009/10. (AQW 30/10)

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

The information requested is set out in the tables below.

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2005/06

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuisgeoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir

Constituency name	School name
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2006/07

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuisseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na SpEiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche

Constituency name	School name
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2007/08

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuiseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na SpEiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann

Constituency name	School name
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2008/09

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuiseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí NÉill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps Downpatrick (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gerann
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2009/10

Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste

Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuisgeoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí NÉill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps Downpatrick (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2005/06

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2006/07

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2007/08

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2008/09

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2009/10

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

Irish Medium Post Primary Schools

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education to list all Irish medium post primary schools by parliamentary constituency in each of the last five years including 2009/10. (AQW 31/10)

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

The information requested is set out in the tables below.

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2005/06

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuiseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir

Constituency name	School name
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2006/07

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuisseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche

Constituency name	School name
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2007/08

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Damba
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuiseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na SpEiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí DhocharTaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann

Constituency name	School name
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2008/09

Constituency name	School name
Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuiseoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí NÉill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps Downpatrick (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2009/10

Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast North	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin
Belfast South	Scoil An Droichid
Belfast West	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste

Belfast North	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Bhfál
Belfast West	Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh
Belfast West	Gaelscoil Na Móna
Belfast West	Gaelscoil An Lonnáin
Belfast West	Scoil Na Fuisgeoige
East Derry	St Canice's Ps (Unit)
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	Bunscoil An Traonaigh
Foyle	Bunscoil Cholmcille
Foyle	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Na Speiríní
Mid Ulster	Gaelscoil Uí Néill
Mid Ulster	St Brigid's Ps Tirkane (Unit)
Mid Ulster	St Mary's Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	Bunscoil An Iúir
Newry And Armagh	Christian Brothers' Ps (Unit)
Newry And Armagh	St Patrick's Ps (Unit)
North Antrim	Bunscoil An Chaistil
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach
South Antrim	Gaelscoil Éanna
South Down	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
South Down	St Patrick's Boys' Ps Downpatrick (Unit)
Upper Bann	St Francis Ps (Unit)
Upper Bann	St John The Baptist Ps (Unit)
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
West Tyrone	Gaelscoil Na Gcrann
West Tyrone	St Columbkille's Ps (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2005/06

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2006/07

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2007/08

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2008/09

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND UNITS BY CONSTITUENCY 2009/10

Constituency name	School name
Belfast West	Coláiste Feirste
Foyle	Coláiste Bhríde
Newry And Armagh	Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit)

Irish Medium Primary Schools

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils enrolled in Irish medium primary schools in each of the last three years including 2009/10. (AQW 33/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh leagtha amach sna táblaí thíos. Ní bheidh fáil ar shonraí rollaithe don scoilbhliain 2009/10 go dtí go geríochnófar an daonáireamh scoile níos moille i mbliana.

The information requested is set out in the tables below. Enrolment data for 2009/10 will not be available until completion of the school census later in the year.

(AQW 28/10) PUPILS ENROLLED AT GRANT-AIDED IRISH MEDIUM POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2006/07 – 2008/09

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Coláiste Feirste	489	506	513

(AQW 33/10) PUPILS ENROLLED AT GRANT-AIDED IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2006/07 – 2008/09

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	65	71	69
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	303	294	297
Gaelscoil Na Bhfál	213	211	211
Bunscoil An Tsléibhe Dhuibh	176	168	180
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	134	119	99
Scoil An Droichid	89	103	125
Gaelscoil An Damba	27	29	0
Gaelscoil Na Móna	66	72	86
Gaelscoil An Lonnáin	44	44	51

School name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Bunscoil Cholmcille	163	159	161
Gaelscoil Uí Dhcartaigh	117	130	131
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	116	135	128
Bunscoil An Traonaigh	22	27	31
Gaelscoil Na Gcrann	38	45	50
Bunscoil An Chastil	71	75	77
Gaelscoil Na Speiríní	21	23	24
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	N.A	19	30
Gaelscoil Éanna	N.A	12	26
Scoil Na Fuisgeoige	134	133	119
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	54	48	58
Bunscoil An Iúir	84	102	104
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	104	113	126
Total	2,041	2,132	2,183

Source: School census

Note:

- Enrolment figures include pupils in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes where applicable.
- Figures exclude pupils who are enrolled in Irish medium units.
- 'n.a.' is "not applicable" as the school existed as an independent school.

Parents Who Have Opted Not to Send Their Children to School

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what assistance has been given to parents who have opted not to send their children to school at the start of the academic year 2009/10. (AQW 64/10)

Minister of Education: Tugann Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne tacaíocht do thuismitheoirí le scoil a fháil dá bpáiste i rith agus i ndiaidh na bpróiseas rollaithe oscailte (a thugann áit do pháistí i scoil). Muna mbíonn áit ar fáil i scoileanna tosaíochtaí an pháiste, soláthróidh an Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne liosta de scoileanna eile a bhfuil áit ar fáil iontu do thuismitheoirí.

Education and Library Boards support parents in finding a school for their child both during, and after, the open enrolment processes (which place children in a school). If a child's preferences have been exhausted, the Education and Library Board will supply the parents with a list of alternative schools with places available.

If at the end of the process some children remain unplaced, their parents are advised to identify a preference for one of the schools with places available in order to ensure that their child will be placed in time for the beginning of the school term. Details of children un-placed and not attending school after the start of the school year are forwarded to the Education Welfare Service as, by this point, there is a non-attendance issue.

Chair Designate of the Education and Skills Authority

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the position of Chair Designate of the Education and Skills Authority (i) how many applicants applied; (ii) how many were short listed; (iii) what criteria were applied for each stage of the appointment; and (iv) who served on the appointment panel.

(AQW 65/10)

Minister of Education: Is féidir liom a chur in iúl: (i) go bhfuarthas 14 iarratas san iomlán; (ii) agus nuair a seiceáladh na hiarratais do incháilitheacht na n-iarratasóirí in aghaidh na gcritéar riachtanach, iarradh ar naonúr acu teacht le haghaidh agallaimh;

I can advise that: (i) a total of 14 applications were received; (ii) following an eligibility paper sift of the applications against the essential criteria nine applicants were invited for interviews; (iii) applicants were expected to demonstrate that they had the necessary skills, experience and competencies, both on their application form and at interview, to meet all the essential criteria as set out in the Information/Application Pack issued to potential candidates. The criteria were Corporate Governance; Leadership; Thinking Strategically; Making an impact with others; and Analytical thinking; (iv) the short listing and interview panel was comprised of Mr Will Haire (DE Permanent Secretary), Ms Brenda McLaughlin (Civil Service Commissioner) and Ms Joan Smyth (Independent Assessor appointed by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPANI)).

Cost of Private Consultancy Firms and Events Companies

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent by her Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events companies. (AQW 70/10)

Minister of Education: Fuair an Roinn seirbhísí ó ghnólachtaí príobháideacha comhairliúcháin agus ó chuideachtaí imeachtaí ar roinnt ócáidí le cúig bliana anuas. Tá achoimre sa tábla thíos ar na costais a tabhaíodh i ngach bliain le cúig bliana airgeadais anuas.

The Department have employed the services of private consultancy firms and events companies on a number of occasions over the last five years. A summary of the costs incurred is contained in the table below for each of the last five financial years.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Financial Year	Private Consultancy Firms £	Events Companies companies
2004/05	£765,799.21	£0.00
2005/06	£532,244.15	£4,205.00
2006/07	£905,600.57	£764.89
2007/08	£1,067,704.53	£4,630.00
2008/09	£665,009.68	£3,620.00

Special Educational Needs Statements

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of young people who have received Special Educational Needs Statements, broken down by (i) constituency ; and (ii) District Council area, in each of the last three years. (AQW 75/10)

Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne (ELBanna) nach gcoinnítear an t-eolas a d'iarr tú de réir toghcheantair nó de réir limistéar na gComhairlí Ceantair. Mar sin de, tá an t-eolas á thabhairt de réir limistéar na mBord, mar seo a leanas:-

The Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that the information you have requested is not held by either constituency or District Council area. The information has, therefore, been provided by Board area as follows:-

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
2006/07*	430	273	335	410	350
2007/08*	393	326	342	660	231
2008/09*	451	280	145	342	200

* academic years

The above figures refer to children and young people who received final statements of special educational need. They do not include those who may have received reviewed statements.

Special Educational Needs

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Education to detail how the additional £25 million for Special Educational Needs has been distributed to date. (AQW 77/10)

Minister of Education: Fuair mo Roinn cistiú de £25 milliún thar dhá bhliain le tús a chur le forfheidhmiú na moltaí beartais san Athbhreithniú ar SEN agus Chuimsiú. Tá sé beartaithe go gcaithfear £750k sa bhliain 2009-10 agus £24.3 milliún sa bhliain 2010-11.

My Department has secured funding of £25 million over two years to commence implementation of the Review of SEN and Inclusion policy proposals. It is planned that £750k will be spent in 2009-10 and £24.3 million in 2010-11.

The £750k secured for 2009/10 will be used for pre-implementation activities on a capacity building programme for teachers and on developing standards/indicators and good practice guidance for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs); funding has also been set aside for the consultation process which is currently underway.

To date, £5k has been allocated to the 5 Education and Library Boards to provide substitute cover for teachers attending SENCO sub-group meetings which formed part of the pre-consultation process.

The 24.3m secured for 2010/11 will be used for the implementation of a number of proposals contained in the Review and which will be individually costed in the coming months.

Entrance Test

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage intake of each entrance test grade accepted by each individual grammar school at the start of the September 2009 school term. (AQW 80/10)

Minister of Education: Níl an t-eolas seo ag an Roinn Oideachais faoi láthair. Cruinníonn na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne na staitisticí seo ó iar-bhunscoileanna i mí Mheán Fómhair agus i mí Dheireadh Fómhair gach bliain, le haistriú daltaí idir scoileanna sna chéad chúpla seachtain den téarma acadúil a chur san áireamh.

This information is not currently available to the Department of Education. Each year the Education and Library Boards gather these statistics from post primary schools in September and October, allowing for movement of pupils between schools in the initial weeks of the academic term.

Once the statistics are collated and checked they are made available to the Department by early November. When this information becomes available I will write to you providing the statistics you seek.

Alcohol Awareness for Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education to outline what plans she has to introduce alcohol awareness for children under the school health curriculum. (AQW 95/10)

Minister of Education: Tá mé sásta a chur in iúl go bhfuil feasacht ar alcól do pháistí mar chuid den churaclam cheana féin. Tríd an churaclam athbhreithnithe, bíonn gach duine óg ábalta foghlaim faoi na héifeachtaí a bhíonn ag substaintí dleathacha agus mídhleathacha ar an chorp agus faoi na rioscaí agus na hiarmhairtí a bhaineann lena mí-úsáid. Bíonn siad ábalta scileanna a fhorbairt a bhíonn de dhíth orthu le déileáil le piarbhrú agus leis na fadhbanna a thug orthu drugaí agus alcól a ghlacadh sa chéad áit.

I am pleased to say that alcohol awareness for children is already part of the curriculum. The revised curriculum gives every young person the chance to investigate the effects on the body of legal and illegal substances and the risks and consequences of their misuse. It allows them to develop the skills they need to deal with peer pressure and the problems that may drive them to drugs and alcohol in the first place.

Schools, along with parents and others, have an essential role to play in ensuring our young people are fully equipped to make the right choices with regard to drugs and alcohol. My Department has policies in place to educate and support our young people and has issued guidance to all schools on drugs education, including alcohol. Schools are required to have a drugs policy which includes education on alcohol and drugs misuse. Education Boards provide support to schools and youth clubs with dedicated drug and alcohol education officers.

The youth and community sector also targets programmes at those most at risk of drug and alcohol misuse, to help them make healthy choices.

I would like to assure you that my Department is participating fully in the DHSSPS led New Strategic Direction on Drugs and Alcohol Steering Group, including the DHSSPS Minister's recent cross-departmental, integrated Action Plan that seeks to prevent and reduce the harm suffered by children and young people from alcohol misuse.

Dyslexic Children

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many children in schools are dyslexic; and how many are awaiting assessment. (AQW 96/10)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn sonraí ó Dhaonáireamh Scoile 2008/09 go raibh 5,944 dalta scoile san iomlán ag Céim 1 – 5 den Chód Cleachtais do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais (SEN) a raibh disléicse orthu.

Data from the 2008/09 School Census shows that there were a total of 5,944 pupils in schools at Stage 1 – 5 of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice with Dyslexia.

There were 175 pupils recorded at Stage 4 of the SEN Code of Practice. Stage 4 of the Code is when the relevant Education and Library Board (ELB) considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment. Therefore, pupils at this stage are awaiting assessment from the ELB to determine if they are to be classified as being statemented.

Note:

1. Figures include nursery schools, primary, post primary and special schools.

Swine Flu

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to address the possibility of Swine Flu outbreaks at primary and secondary schools. (AQW 115/10)

Minister of Education: Ón uair a bhris fliú na muc amach níos luaithe i mbliana, tá mo Roinn ag comhoibriú go dlúth leis an Roinn Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí agus leis an Public Health Agency le comhairle agus treoir a sholáthar do scoileanna agus don earnáil oideachais ar fad.

Since the outbreak of swine flu earlier this year, my Department has worked closely with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Public Health Agency to provide schools and the wider education sector with advice and guidance.

This advice and guidance was updated and issued to schools in time for the new school year starting this month and school principals have been given direct access telephone numbers to the Public Health Agency, if they require specific case advice. Regular good personal hygiene practice is key to reducing the spread of all virus, including swine flu, in schools. Schools have been advised to ensure that adequate supplies of liquid soap and hot water are available for both pupils and staff.

I have met on two occasions with the Minister of Health and on one occasion with the Minister for Employment and Learning to ensure a continued co-ordinated approach to how the education sector deals with any impacts of swine flu. In addition, my officials monitor advice from the World health Organisation and liaise on an all Ireland basis.

Interactive Computerised Assessment System

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education what plans are in place to review the Interactive Computerised Assessment System. (AQW 198/10)

Minister of Education: Tugadh isteach an Interactive Computerised Assessment System (InCAS) ar bhonn céimneach ón scoilbhliain 2007/08 le tacú le measúnú diagnóiseach i mbunscoileanna do dhaltai i mblianta 4-7.

The Interactive Computerised Assessment System (InCAS) has been introduced on a phased basis since the 2007/08 school year to support diagnostic assessment in primary schools for pupils in Years 4-7.

My officials are working with the Education and Training Inspectorate to plan the evaluation of the use of the InCAS outcomes in primary schools to inform teaching and learning and good practice will be highlighted as part of the inspection process.

In addition, training and support for teachers in using InCAS has been provided by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and an evaluation of the InCAS implementation process has been carried out in both the 2007/08 and 2008/09 school years. My officials are providing you with a copy of the 2008/09 evaluation report in your capacity as Chairperson of the Education Committee, and a copy of the previous evaluation was provided last year to Committee members. CCEA advises that their evaluation process has been independently appraised by the Consultation Institute and that the feedback from this is very positive.

0-6 Strategy

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education when the 0-6 Strategy will be published. (AQW 209/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an Straitéis á dréachtú faoi láthair le hionchur ó na príomhpháirtithe leasmhara. Tá sé beartaithe comhairliúchán a dhéanamh leis an Ghrúpa Réigiúnach Tagartha agus le Bord an Tionscadail níos moille i mbliana sula gcuirfear an Straitéis faoi bhráid an Choiste Oideachais. Ina dhiaidh sin, eiseofar an Straitéis le haghaidh comhairliúcháin phoiblí.

The Department is currently drafting the strategy in conjunction with input from key stakeholders. Consultations with the Regional Reference Group and Project Board are planned later in the year prior to the Strategy being made available to the Education Committee, after which time the Strategy will be issued for public consultation.

STEM Review

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education when the STEM Review will be published. (AQW 210/10)

Minister of Education: Tá sé beartaithe go bhfoilsoidh an fhoireann neamhspleách athbhreithnithe an tuarascáil ar athbhreithniú STEM agus go gcuirfidh an Dr Hugh Cormican faoi mo bhráid agus faoi bhráid an Aire Fostaíochta agus Foghlama í ag ócáid lainseála ar 30 Meán Fómhair 2009 ag an Ghailearaí Fada ag Stormont.

It is intended that the STEM review report will be published by the independent review team and presented to the DEL Minister and myself by Dr Hugh Cormican at a launch planned for 30 September 2009 at the Long Gallery in Stormont.

Ballymoney High School

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons for the delay in a new school build for Ballymoney High School. (AQW 212/10)

Minister of Education: The Outline Business Case (OBC) for Ballymoney High School and Rainey Endowed School confirming PPP procurement was approved by the Department in October 2008. Since that time problems with financial markets brought about by the Credit Crunch called into question the viability of achieving a Value for Money (VfM) solution to the Schools' accommodation needs via PPP procurement. The Department needed to assess the impact of the current economic climate on this and other PPP projects before proceeding. The Department has concluded that an affordable VfM solution to the Schools' accommodation needs is unlikely to be achieved through the use of PPP procurement.

Ar 4 Meán Fómhair 2009 cuireadh litir chuig Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt, agus cuireadh cóip di chuig Príomhoide Ballymoney High School, le cur in iúl gur féidir tús a chur le planáil don scoil nua agus go bpleanálfaid don scoil faoi mhodh soláthair atá á mhaoiniú go comhghnásach.

On 4 September 2009 a letter issued to the North Eastern Education and Library Board, copied to the Principal of Ballymoney High School, confirming that planning for a new school can now commence and will be taken forward under a conventionally funded procurement route. The existing Economic Appraisals will be used to

take the project forward to the planning stage and the existing project manager has been retained to provide continuity of service to both schools and to accelerate delivery.

New IT systems

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed within her Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 217/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh mionsonraithe thíos:

The information requested is detailed below:

- (i) Teachers' Payroll/HR System
- (ii) Initial Budget
 - £868k implementation cost
 - £95k recurrent cost Year 1
 - £136k recurrent cost Year 2 onwards
- (iii) Actual Costs
 - Implementation costs to Date £836k. Known costs to complete implementation £70k.
 - Recurrent costs will be as stated
- (iv) Estimated Start Date April 2008
- (v) Actual Start Date March 2009

Castle Towers School, Ballymena

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to relocate the Castle Towers School, Ballymena, onto a single site; and to ensure that this project is brought to an early conclusion. (AQW 283/10)

Minister of Education: Tá mórscéim chaipitiúil oibreacha do Castle Tower Special School ag céim an Bhreithmheasa Eacnamaíochta (EA). Moltar foirgneamh nua ar iarláithreán Ballymena Boys' and Girls' Schools san EA.

A major capital works scheme for Castle Tower Special School is at Economic Appraisal (EA) stage. The EA recommends a new build on the former site of Ballymena Boys' and Girls' Schools.

In August 2009, the Department of Education (DE) provided the NEELB with comments on the EA and a further revised EA is expected to be submitted shortly. Following approval of the EA, it has been agreed that the scheme will proceed to project development and design stage. The project will then be in a strong position to compete for funding from a future capital announcement.

Primary and Post Primary Schools

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education how many primary and post primary schools have closed in each of the last six years. (AQW 328/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas mionsonraithe sa tábla thíos. Ní áirítear Náiscoileanna, Scoileanna Speisialta ná aonaid ag bunscoileanna ná ag iarbhunscoileanna ar druideadh iad.

The information is detailed in the table below. Closures of Nursery Schools, Special Schools or closure of units at primary or post-primary schools are not included.

School Year	Primary (incl. preparatory departments)		Post Primary	
	Closures	Amalgamations	Closures	Amalgamations
2003/04	4	1 amalgamation involving 2 schools	0	2 amalgamations involving 4 schools
2004/05	4	5 amalgamations involving 12 schools	0	1 amalgamation involving 3 schools
2005/06	8	1 amalgamation involving 2 schools	1	1 amalgamation involving 2 schools
2006/07	9	3 amalgamations involving 8 schools	2	No amalgamations
2007/08	8	4 amalgamations involving 9 schools	4	No amalgamations
2008/09	8	No amalgamations	4	No amalgamations
Totals	41	14 amalgamations involving 33 schools	11	4 amalgamations involving 9 schools

Primary School Uniform Grants

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Education how many Primary school uniform grants were awarded up to the start of the new school term; and what was the monetary value of those grants awarded. (AQW 354/10)

Minister of Education: Tá deimhnithe ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, arb iad a riarann an scéim, go raibh 24,135 deontas íoctha acu ag deireadh mhí Lúnasa i leith costais éidí bunscoile ag costas iomlán de £844,725. Tá curtha in iúl acu fosta go bhfuil iarratais ar an deontas d'éidí bunscoile á bpróiseáil acu go fóill.

The Education and Library Boards, which administer the scheme, have confirmed that at the end of August they paid 24,135 grants towards the cost of primary school uniforms at a total cost of £844,725. They have also advised that they are still processing applications for the Primary School uniform grant.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to the proposed E3 campus (i) when the business case was carried out; (ii) when the business case was reviewed and amended; and (iii) whether the proposal been included in the Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College. (AQW 11/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The Economic Appraisal for the proposed E3 campus confirmed that it was value for money in November 2004. No substantive change has been made since that date. The project received a Ministerial funding commitment at April 2006. Although the impending 2007 college merger delayed the project, design development has now been completed, Planning Approval has been granted and the project is out to tender with contractors expected to be on site in January 2010.

The Terms of Reference for the Efficiency Review of Belfast Metropolitan College required the adequacy and effectiveness of the College estate planning process to be examined. The Review considered the adequacy of the college's approach to strategic planning across the entire estate but did not carry out a detailed examination of individual sites.

Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many draft reports on the Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College have been written and subsequently amended. (AQW 12/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The team of consultants which carried out the Efficiency Review of Belfast Metropolitan College has provided two draft reports to the Department. The second draft has been formally presented to the college governing body for consideration and comment. The college provided comments which are now being considered and, once agreed, the report will be finalised.

Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the cost of the Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College. (AQW 13/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The total cost of the Efficiency Review of Belfast Metropolitan College was £71,273.

Crèche Facilities on Campus

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the current status of the crèche at the University of Ulster's Coleraine Campus. (AQW 18/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am advised by the University of Ulster that the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

The University is currently considering options for childcare provision at its Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses. The overall aim of the review is to ensure the most effective support for the widest range of students, staff and children. As part of this review, the University has recently undertaken a public consultation process.

The consultation period ended at the end of August 2009, with over 350 responses. The University's Child Care Review Working Group will now be reviewing the submissions received. Following this review, options will be presented to the University for consideration.

The University has stated that it remains committed to providing support for childcare services. As mentioned earlier in this response, the University has also stated that, whatever the outcomes of the consultation process, the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

Crèche Facilities on Campus

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on any plans which may affect the future status of the crèche at Coleraine campus, University of Ulster. (AQW 20/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am advised by the University of Ulster that the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

The University is currently considering options for childcare provision at its Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses. The overall aim of the review is to ensure the most effective support for the widest range of students, staff and children. As part of this review, the University has recently undertaken a public consultation process.

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The University has stated that it remains committed to providing support for childcare services. As mentioned earlier in this response, the University has also stated that, whatever the outcomes of the consultation process, the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

Crèche Facilities on Campus

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if the provision of crèche facilities on campus is an integral part of future planning to ensure that third level education is open to all parents. (AQW 21/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am advised by the University of Ulster that the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

The University is currently considering options for childcare provision at its Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses. The overall aim of the review is to ensure the most effective support for the widest range of students, staff and children. As part of this review, the University has recently undertaken a public consultation process.

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The University has stated that it remains committed to providing support for childcare services. As mentioned earlier in this response, the University has also stated that, whatever the outcomes of the consultation process, the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

Crèche Facilities on Campus

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if the withdrawal of crèche facilities on campus would reduce the equality of opportunity for parents. (AQW 22/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am advised by the University of Ulster that the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

The University is currently considering options for childcare provision at its Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses. The overall aim of the review is to ensure the most effective support for the widest range of students, staff and children. As part of this review, the University has recently undertaken a public consultation process.

The consultation period ended at the end of August 2009, with over 350 responses. The University's Child Care Review Working Group will now be reviewing the submissions received. Following this review, options will be presented to the University for consideration.

The University has stated that it remains committed to providing support for childcare services. As mentioned earlier in this response, the University has also stated that, whatever the outcomes of the consultation process, the current childcare arrangements on all its campuses will be maintained in their present form until, at least, August 2010.

Higher Education Strategy

Mr M Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the terms of reference for the Higher Education Strategy announced on 6 August 2009. (AQW 200/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Terms of Reference for the Higher Education Strategy are currently in draft form. The Steering Group, which will oversee the development of the Strategy, will meet in late Autumn to agree the Terms of Reference. When they are agreed, it is my intention to share them with Assembly colleagues.

New IT Systems

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed within his Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 219/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There have been no new IT systems installed within the Department in the last five years.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Private Consultancy Firms and Events Companies

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much has been spent by her Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events companies.

(AQW 152/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): In relation to the amount spent over the last 5 years by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on (i) Private Consultancy Firms and (ii) Events Companies, the information is outlined in tables shown in Annexes A and B respectively.

ANNEX A

DETI DIVISIONS / NDPBS

EXPENDITURE ON PRIVATE CONSULTANCY FIRMS IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	Expenditure
2008/2009	£3,291,000
2007/2008	£2,867,000
2006/2007	£3,232,000
2005/2006	£3,014,000
2004/2005	£3,206,000

ANNEX B

DETI DIVISIONS / NDPBS

EXPENDITURE ON EVENTS COMPANIES IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Years	Expenditure
2008/2009	£ 134,467
2007/2008	£ 74,497
2006/2007	£ 303,582 *
2005/2006	£ 38,160
2004/2005	£ 47,284

* Approx £198,000 was spent on the Geoparks Conference which was self funding through sponsorship and delegate fees.

Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to give an estimate, on the basis of the most recent figures available, of the size of the tourism sector as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product.

(AQW 155/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The most recent year for which information on the share of Gross Value Added¹ (GVA) accounted for by tourism in Northern Ireland is 2005. The direct value added from tourism is 2.0% of total Northern Ireland GVA in 2005 and when indirect and induced effects are also included it contributed a total of 3.7% to Northern Ireland GVA².

- 1 Regional Gross Value Added is now used by the Office for National Statistics instead of Gross Domestic Product, when producing the UK Regional Accounts.
- 2 The latest updated estimates are included in the research report 'Tourism in the Northern Ireland Economy – Updated estimates to 2005' which was published in June 2008.

Economic Disadvantage

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people are estimated to be living in economic disadvantage in (i) each constituency; and (ii) each council area. (AQW 187/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Estimates of 'economic disadvantage' are based on the income and employment domains of the 2005 NI Multiple Deprivation Measure. These domains are not mutually exclusive i.e. one person may be counted as both 'income deprived' and 'employment deprived' depending on their circumstances. It is therefore not possible to answer this question and provide a single measure of the number living in 'economic disadvantage'.

However for information, the tables below provide details of the numbers of people who are 'income deprived' and 'employment deprived' by Parliamentary Constituency and Local Government District per the 2005 measure.

(I) NUMBER OF PEOPLE 'INCOME DEPRIVED' OR 'EMPLOYMENT DEPRIVED' BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY.

Parliamentary Constituency	Number Income Deprived	Number Employment Deprived
Belfast East	14,981	6,378
Belfast North	30,450	10,569
Belfast South	14,959	6,478
Belfast West	39,709	12,889
East Antrim	11,948	6,263
East Londonderry	18,055	7,420
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	20,572	7,787
Foyle	36,956	13,545
Lagan Valley	12,592	6,356
Mid Ulster	20,460	7,981
Newry and Armagh	27,071	10,156
North Antrim	18,000	7,636
North Down	9,668	5,078
South Antrim	13,185	6,954
South Down	20,101	8,849
Strangford	12,658	6,917
Upper Bann	19,905	9,807
West Tyrone	23,633	9,905

N.B. Figures are not mutually exclusive i.e. one person may be counted as both 'income deprived' and 'employment deprived' depending on their circumstances.

Source: NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005

(II) NUMBER OF PEOPLE 'INCOME DEPRIVED' OR 'EMPLOYMENT DEPRIVED' BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT.

Local Government District	Number Income Deprived	Number Employment Deprived
Antrim	7,093	3,701
Ards	10,164	5,347
Armagh	10,374	4,655
Ballymena	8,956	3,969
Ballymoney	5,145	2,235
Banbridge	6,012	3,289

Local Government District	Number Income Deprived	Number Employment Deprived
Belfast	82,986	30,119
Carrickfergus	5,143	2,844
Castlereagh	7,606	4,186
Coleraine	10,445	4,216
Cookstown	8,051	3,286
Craigavon	16,499	7,880
Derry	36,956	13,545
Down	11,584	5,252
Dungannon	11,920	4,331
Fermanagh	13,480	4,920
Larne	4,759	2,415
Limavady	7,610	3,204
Lisburn	19,801	7,954
Magherafelt	7,581	3,231
Moyle	3,899	1,432
Newry and Mourne	24,912	8,969
Newtownabbey	12,031	5,657
North Down	8,263	4,429
Omagh	11,409	4,919
Strabane	12,224	4,986

N.B. Figures are not mutually exclusive i.e. one person may be counted as both 'income deprived' and 'employment deprived' depending on their circumstances.

Source: NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005

Visitors to Northern Ireland

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people have visited Northern Ireland (i) in total; and from (ii) Great Britain; (iii) the Republic of Ireland; (iv) Mainland Europe; (v) North America; and (vi) elsewhere, in each of the last five years. (AQW 188/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Number of trips taken in Northern Ireland by out of state* visitors who stayed at least one night (2004-2008)

	(i) Total out of state* visitors to NI (000s)	(ii) Visitors to NI from Great Britain (000s)	(iii) Visitors to NI from the Republic of Ireland (000s)	(iv) Visitors to NI from Mainland Europe (000s)	(v) Visitors to NI from North America (000s)	(vi) Visitors to NI from elsewhere (000s)
2008	2,076	1,202	367	261	160	86
2007	2,107	1,285	322	266	163	71
2006	1,979	1,281	277	209	145	66
2005	1,972	1,308	271	176	145	71
2004	1,985	1,408	252	133	122	70

* Out of state refers to visitors from outside Northern Ireland, i.e. excludes domestic tourism.

Satellite Broadband

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she has taken to reduce the cost of satellite broadband for customers who are unable to avail of fixed line broadband. (AQW 243/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: DETI has put in place a contract with Avanti Communications which will provide subsidised satellite broadband services across Northern Ireland for the next three years. Under the contract, Avanti are offering a range of services with downstream rates of between 512 kbps and 3 megabits per second (mbps) for business and residential users.

Prices start at £24.47 per month and £74.75 for installation. These compare favourably with the cost of similar services available under normal commercial conditions elsewhere in the United Kingdom, which are estimated, on average to be approximately £70 per month, with an installation charge of £1,400.

The telecommunications market is privatised and regulated nationally by Ofcom. Investment decisions in the delivery and pricing of services are made by the private sector service providers. DETI has no remit to intervene in such decisions, but may make investments in the marketplace to deliver networks or improve their extent, quality and reliability where it notes underlying market failure.

Satellite represents one solution for users unable to access a fixed line broadband service. In addition to the Remote Broadband Services contract with Avanti Communications, my Department is also currently supporting 3 projects under the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund which will deliver substantial fixed wireless networks across rural parts of Northern Ireland. These projects will promote competition, making an alternative broadband solution available to customers, including those based in Cookstown and surrounding areas. Where there is sufficient evidence of demand and take-up, this may impact on pricing of services.

Fixed Line Broadband

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if any assessment has been carried out to establish which areas are unable to avail of satisfactory speed fixed line broadband, and if so, to detail these areas. (AQW 245/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: DETI has worked hard to ensure that all premises across Northern Ireland have access to a broadband service of 512 kilobits per second which can satisfactorily support the services small businesses require today. However, my Department has maintained a technology neutral stance, letting the market decide on the most cost effective and efficient solutions.

It is important to note that this market consists of networks which are owned and managed by private sector companies. My Department cannot establish with absolute certainty those areas where broadband can be delivered over fixed telephone wires as the market is continuously changing and evolving. However, it is currently estimated that over 99% of premises are able to get a service delivered over fixed telephone lines. This estimate is based on studies mapping distances between postcodes and telephone exchanges and assuming that services can be delivered by fixed telephone lines to postcodes up to 8km away from an exchange (an assumption validated by the private sector).

Those premises that require an alternative technology are scattered right across Northern Ireland, mainly in rural areas. It is impractical to provide a detailed list but a map which indicates these areas can be accessed at [www.detini.gov.uk/BT Exchanges](http://www.detini.gov.uk/BT%20Exchanges) or by contacting Telecoms Policy Unit at DETI on 02890 529900.

Northern Ireland Manufacturing Firms

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the percentage of Northern Ireland manufacturing firms which are situated within the Craigavon Borough Council area. (AQW 268/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The latest figures sourced from the Inter departmental Business Register indicate that at June 2009, there were 225 manufacturing businesses situated in the Craigavon Borough Council area. This equates to 5% of all the manufacturing businesses located within Northern Ireland.

Please note that the business register only contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are VAT registered or which operate a PAYE scheme. As a result the estimates used in this answer will exclude those smaller businesses which do not exceed the VAT threshold or are VAT exempt.

Northern Ireland Manufacturing Firms

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the percentage of Northern Ireland manufacturing firms which are situated within the Belfast City Council area. (AQW 269/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The latest figures sourced from the Inter departmental Business Register indicate that at June 2009, there were 340 manufacturing businesses situated in the Belfast City Council area. This equates to 8% of all the manufacturing businesses located within Northern Ireland.

Please note that the business register only contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are VAT registered or which operate a PAYE scheme. As a result the estimates used in this answer will exclude those smaller businesses which do not exceed the VAT threshold or are VAT exempt.

Water Charges

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures have been taken to provide assistance to small, local businesses and shops with water charges during the current economic downturn. (AQW 297/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has no powers to provide assistance in respect of water charges.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

PPS21

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the number of planning applications approved since the introduction of PPS 21 in each of the following District Council areas; Omagh, Strabane, Derry City, Fermanagh, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Limavady. (AQW 15/10)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): Following publication of draft PPS 21 on 25 November 2008, my Department has approved a total of 1827 planning applications in the above District Council areas between this date and 31 March 2009. This is broken down by District Council area as follows:

District Council Area	All Approvals	All Rural Approvals	Rural new single dwelling approvals	Rural replacement single dwelling approvals
Cookstown	224	154	49	26
Derry	235	54	11	15
Fermanagh	437	315	150	42
Limavady	130	75	16	14
Magherafelt	276	191	56	51
Omagh	312	211	99	20
Strabane	213	119	54	21
Total	1827	1119	435	189

The figures for all rural approvals comprises applications for any development type in the rural area including, commercial, housing, industrial and agricultural land uses.

The next Development Management quarterly statistics are due for publication on 24 September 2009. These figures will include those applications submitted to my Department between April 2009 and June 2009.

PPS21

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications remain undetermined under draft PPS21 for (i) single dwellings; and (ii) replacement dwellings, in each divisional planning office. (AQW 38/10)

Minister of the Environment: Following the publication of draft PPS 21 on 25 November 2008, my Department is currently considering 1357 planning applications for single dwellings and 211 planning applications for replacement dwellings submitted between this date and July 2009. This is broken down by Divisional Planning Office as follows:

Division	Single Dwellings	Replacement Dwellings	Total Rural Applications
Ballymena	150	39	289
Belfast	15	10	32
Craigavon	522	63	727
Downpatrick	65	31	151
Londonderry	126	29	223
Omagh	479	39	593
Total	1357	211	2015

The column entitled total rural applications refers to all rural applications, including commercial, housing, industrial and agricultural proposals that are currently under consideration by the Department.

Local Government Review

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent on the Local Government Review (i) in total ; and (ii) on consultancy fees. (AQW 41/10)

Minister of the Environment: A total of £4,415,053, including £453,867 for consultancy fees, has been incurred on the local government review by the Department of the Environment, over the period 2005/2006 to 2008/2009. Provision for the current financial year is £4,133,000, which includes £233,000 for consultancy fees. In addition, the Department has covered the cost of the Office of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner – the first review costing £627,137 and the second review £616,877 (estimate), all of which is recoverable from the Consolidated Fund.

Illegal Dumping at Ballyhornan Road

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the investigation into the allegations of illegal dumping at Ballyhornan Road, Downpatrick. (AQW 54/10)

Minister of the Environment: Officials are continuing with their investigation into this case. I am unable to provide more detailed information at this juncture, as to do so could compromise the integrity of our investigation and any future legal proceedings, as well as infringe on the rights of the persons being investigated.

Tree Preservation Order

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to enforce the Tree Preservation Order at Myrtle Lodge, Bryansford. (AQW 55/10)

Minister of the Environment: Firstly, just to clarify, it is assumed that the question relates to Myrtle Lodge, Bryansford Road, Newcastle.

The Department is currently finalising its investigation into an alleged breach of planning control where trees, subject to a Tree Preservation Order, were removed. Unfortunately I cannot provide more information at this stage due to data protection reasons and also so as not to prejudice potential legal action.

Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 69/10)

Minister of the Environment: The table below gives details of my Department's expenditure on private consultancy firms and events organisers for each of the last 5 years.

DOE	2004/05 £	2005/06 £	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £
Private Consultancy Firms	1,031,179	1,292,223	2,097,051	2,131,030	1,346,791
Events Organisers	64,831	67,974	70,033	155,360	148,380
Total	1,096,010	1,360,197	2,167,084	2,286,390	1,495,171

PPS21

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of planning applications awaiting the outcome of the consultation on PPS 21, in each of the following Council areas - Omagh, Strabane, Derry City, Fermanagh, Cookstown. (AQW 99/10)

Minister of the Environment: The number of planning applications which are deferred and awaiting the outcome of the consultation on PPS 21 in each of the Council Areas at 31 July 2009 are as follows;

District Council Area	Deferred PPS14/21 applications
Omagh	176
Strabane	55
Derry City	33
Fermanagh	223
Cookstown	54

Bonfire Sites

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total costs incurred by each local council for cleaning and repairing bonfire sites during the summer of 2009. (AQW 112/10)

Minister of the Environment: The total expenditure incurred by each district council in cleaning up and repairing bonfire sites in the summer of 2009 is set out in the table below.

Council	£
Antrim	2,978
Ards	7,202
Armagh	6,538
Ballymena	3,877
Ballymoney	9,445
Banbridge	400
Belfast	20,141
Carrickfergus	950
Castlereagh	9,529
Coleraine	447

Council	£
Cookstown	1,411
Craigavon	14,000
Derry	6,795
Down	3,054
Dungannon & S Tyrone	0
Fermanagh	0
Larne	12,016
Limavady	227
Lisburn	1,616
Magherafelt	930
Moyle*	3,370
Newry & Mourne	6,000
Newtownabbey	4,052
North Down*	2,000
Omagh	0
Strabane	0
Total	116,978

* estimate

Planning Service

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Planning Service to detail (i) the income received from fees; (ii) the total number of staff employed; and (iii) the total of salaries paid, for each month, in each of the last three years. (AQW 137/10)

Minister of the Environment: The figures requested are shown below:

PLANNING FEE INCOME LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS

	06/07 £'000	07/08 £'000	08/09 £'000
April	1,136	1,427	1,970
May	1,363	1,765	1,860
June	1,842	1,705	1,739
July	1,755	1,932	1,493
August	1,574	1,902	1,301
September	1,738	2,058	1,327
October	1,731	1,982	1,564
November	1,755	1,704	1,099
December	1,523	1,272	1,063
January	1,765	1,767	1,208
February	1,432	1,832	1,258
March	2,014	1,995	1,302
Total	19,628	21,341	17,184

STAFF NUMBERS LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS

	06/07	07/08	08/09
April	860	858	856
May	868	864	848
June	875	861	858
July	924	880	858
August	924	872	858
September	911	867	877
October	871	858	893
November	877	856	886
December	877	850	888
January	867	855	887
February	863	844	886
March	853	851	867

SALARY INFORMATION LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS

	06/07 £'000	07/08 £'000	08/09 £'000
April	1,831	1,122	1,958
May	1,841	2,133	1,979
June	1,854	2,179	1,996
July	1,913	2,324	2,013
August	1,910	1,866	2,082
September	1,911	2,078	2,100
October	1,824	1,922	2,166
November	1,845	2,111	2,122
December	1,813	2,085	2,146
January	1,834	1,971	2,088
February	1,807	1,994	2,075
March	3,068*	2,052	2,171
Total	23,451	23,837	24,896

* Includes back pay accrual of £1.2m

The Planning Reform

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the planning reform (i) to detail the total cost of additional staff employed; and (ii) what degree of costs was absorbed by the reduction in existing staff costs due to decreased numbers of planning applications. (AQW 138/10)

Minister of the Environment: The total cost of additional staff recruited and re-deployed into specific Planning Reform posts during 2008/09 was £504,317. The costs for 2009/10 are projected to be in the region of £950k as staff will be in post for the full financial year. To date, the cost of the staff working on reform has been met through bids for additional funding rather than any reduction in existing staff costs and further bids will be submitted to cover these costs for the current and next financial year.

Driving Licences

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total costs of recalling and replacing the 400 driving licences which were recently issued with an incorrect expiry date. (AQW 161/10)

Minister of the Environment: A total of 409 licences have been identified as requiring amendment to the dates printed on the licence. The standard cost of producing a replacement driving licence is estimated at £19, giving a total cost of £7,771. This cost, which will be borne by the Department, includes all administrative, production and normal postage charges.

Middle Management and Senior Council Officials

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment how many middle management and senior council officials have either (i) been made redundant; or (ii) had their employment terminated and subsequently re-employed at another council in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 164/10)

Minister of the Environment: Neither my Department nor the Local Government Staff Commission holds the requested information.

Grouse Committee

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Grouse Committee set up to address the fall in grouse stocks, whether he has developed a suitable method of fox control to enable grouse stocks to regain some of their lost status. (AQW 182/10)

Minister of the Environment: The population of red grouse in Northern Ireland has only recently (2004) been accurately estimated at between 202 and 221 pairs with densities of between one and three pairs per square kilometre and sometimes lower.

Loss and fragmentation of upland heathland and blanket bog habitat as a result of overgrazing, agricultural improvement and afforestation are believed to be the most significant factors affecting grouse distribution across Northern Ireland. Predator control, including control of foxes has traditionally been carried out by land managers as part of their management of grouse moors.

After extensive consultation, a Northern Ireland Species Action Plan for Red Grouse was published in 2008. The inaugural meeting of the Steering Group established to advise on the delivery of this Action Plan takes place this month and the issue of appropriate predator control will be discussed.

This Group, with representation from a wide range of sporting and conservation interests, will encourage its members to implement the identified actions to ensure effective and sustainable outcomes for red grouse.

Red Kites

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for an update on the release of Red Kites in the Mid and South Down area; and (ii) what are the findings on the impact of Red Kites on bird life and animals in the area. (AQW 184/10)

Minister of the Environment: In 2008, 27 red kites were released into the South Down area as part of a three year re-introduction programme. A further 26 birds were released in summer 2009. There have been four fatalities of red kites over the first year of this project.

Where red kites have been introduced at other locations throughout the UK and Ireland there have been no reports of negative impacts on the biodiversity of the area.

Red kites mainly scavenge for their food and so they are expected to have little impact on birds and animals in the South Down area. Ongoing monitoring and radio-tracking have shown the birds foraging on farmland where they have been observed feeding mainly on earthworms and other invertebrates.

Summer Flooding

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the summer flooding, to detail (i) the total number of successful emergency payment claims made; (ii) the total amount of emergency payments made; and (iii) the estimated cost of administering emergency payments in each of the last five years, in each local council area. (AQW 288/10)

Minister of the Environment: The first “Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils – Flooding” was introduced in June 2007. With regard to this Scheme, (i) the total number of successful emergency payment claims made was 1,181; (ii) the total amount of emergency payments made was £1,181,000; and (iii) the estimated cost of administering emergency payments was £238,099.

In relation to the second Scheme which was announced in August 2008; (i) the total number of successful emergency payment claims was 1,643; (ii) the total amount of emergency payments made was £1,643,000 and (iii) the estimated cost of administering emergency payments was £146,692.

The “Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils – Flooding 2009/2010” was re-activated on 2 September 2009 and claims from district councils are due to be received by the Department by 1 December 2009.

The details for individual councils are set out in the tables below.

District Council	Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils – June 2007		
	Total Number of Successful Emergency Payment Claims Made	Total Amount of Emergency Payments Made	Estimated Cost of Administering Emergency Payments
		£	£
Antrim	4	4,000	0
Ards	17	17,000	392.55
Armagh	6	6,000	0
Ballymena	11	11,000	0
Ballymoney	0	0	0
Banbridge	0	0	0
Belfast	609	609,000	218,626.48
Carrickfergus	0	0	0
Castlereagh	354	354,000	12,095.61
Coleraine	6	6,000	325.5
Cookstown	5	5,000	0
Craigavon	0	0	0
Derry	0	0	0
Down	17	17,000	536.18
Dungannon & S Tyrone	7	7,000	370
Fermanagh	0	0	0
Larne	9	9,000	0
Limavady	2	2,000	0
Lisburn	8	8,000	0
Magherafelt	3	3,000	0
Moyle	17	17,000	1,716.21
Newry & Mourne	5	5,000	0
Newtownabbey	1	1,000	0

District Council	Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils – June 2007		
	Total Number of Successful Emergency Payment Claims Made	Total Amount of Emergency Payments Made	Estimated Cost of Administering Emergency Payments
		£	£
North Down	3	3,000	0
Omagh	95	95,000	4,036.61
Strabane	2	2,000	0
Total	1,181	1,181,000	238,099.14

District Council	Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils – August 2008		
	Total Number of Successful Emergency Payment Claims Made	Total Amount of Emergency Payments Made	Estimated Cost of Administering Emergency Payments
		£	£
Antrim	178	178,000	23,615.81
Ards	5	5,000	0
Armagh	8	8,000	624.48
Ballymena	154	154,000	1,587.14
Ballymoney	11	11,000	734.96
Banbridge	106	106,000	5,375.08
Belfast	347	347,000	97,729.18
Carrickfergus	4	4,000	0
Castlereagh	144	144,000	1,528.05
Coleraine	4	4,000	633.85
Cookstown	8	8,000	0
Craigavon	129	129,000	737.76
Derry	0	0	0
Down	135	135,000	12,664.87
Dungannon & S Tyrone	17	17,000	0
Fermanagh	1	1,000	0
Larne	6	6,000	0
Limavady	1	1,000	0
Lisburn	158	158,000	191.00
Magherafelt	24	24,000	0
Moyle	1	1,000	962.66
Newry & Mourne	47	47,000	0
Newtownabbey	131	131,000	234.67
North Down	8	8,000	0
Omagh	16	16,000	72.36
Strabane	0	0	0
Total	1,643	1,643,000	146,691.87

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how many complaints have been received by his Department in relation to the Central Procurement Directorate from (i) individual companies; (ii) consortiums; (iii) solicitors on behalf of individual companies; and (iv) solicitors on behalf of consortiums. (AQW 149/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): During the period April 2006 to March 2009 a total of 19 formal complaints were made in relation to the Central Procurement Directorate. All were from individual companies. A breakdown for each year is as follows:

Year	Number of Complaints received
2006/2007	3
2007/2008	7
2008/2009	9
Total	19

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if the Central Procurement Directorate is quality assured, and, if so, to what level. (AQW 160/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Central Procurement Directorate was externally and independently audited on 22nd to the 25th June 2009 and was assessed and formally certified as meeting the requirements of BS EN ISO 9001:2008 standard.

Rates Payments

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures have been taken to provide assistance to small business and shops with Rates payments during the current economic downturn. (AQW 295/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: A clause providing for a Small Business Rate Relief scheme for Northern Ireland has been included in the Rates Amendment Bill which I introduced into the Assembly on 14 September. This was one of the Executive measures announced by my predecessor Nigel Dodds in December 2008 to address the economic downturn. It will provide around £8m to £9m of rate relief to in excess of 16,000 small businesses with enhanced relief for small Post Offices and will be funded through the DEL. Provided we get the Bill through the Assembly, the scheme will come into operation on 1 April 2010. It will be applied automatically to eligible businesses. I would strongly encourage members support for the passage of the Bill so that the scheme can be put in place and assistance provided to our small business sector at this most difficult time.

In addition to the Small Business Rate Relief scheme, small businesses are also currently benefitting from the freeze in the non-domestic regional rate during the current CSR period, and many will also benefit from the pegging of industrial rates at 30% liability until 31 March 2011.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Dental Surgery in Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on what date the application for planning approval for a new Health Service dental surgery in Dungannon was submitted; and the exact location of the proposed surgery. (AQW 100/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The new health service dental surgery in Dungannon is being commissioned as part of the wider programme to recruit an additional 38 health service dentists. The contract to provide this service was awarded to Oasis Dental Care in May. Under the terms of this contract, Oasis, and not my Department or the HSC Board, are responsible for identifying, securing and equipping the new practices, and this includes all planning matters. However, I understand that the planning application for this practice has been submitted and is being considered by the relevant Council.

I have already stated that all 38 additional dentists will be in place within 12 months of the first new practices opening in Enniskillen and Londonderry later this year. I remain confident that this will happen.

Enhanced Hospital in Omagh

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety the current stage in the procurement process for the proposed enhanced hospital in Omagh; and when he anticipates making an announcement on this matter. (AQW 180/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The procurement of the new enhanced local hospital in Omagh has been paused to facilitate a review of the business case, including the procurement method. Due to the uncertainties in financial markets, I considered it appropriate to review whether PFI remains the most appropriate procurement option for this project in terms of affordability and value for money. The review is nearing completion and, at that stage, I will be better placed to advise on the timing of the procurement process and the commencement of the construction phase of the project.

Councillors

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for the names and political party affiliation of any Councillors appointed by him to an agency, trust or board under the governance of the Department. (AQW 205/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In my capacity as Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety I have appointed the following Councillors to HSC agencies, trusts or boards as listed below:

Name of Organisation	Appointed Member	Political Party Affiliation
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	Seamus Shields*	SDLP
Patient & Client Council	Elizabeth Adger	DUP
Patient & Client Council	Tim Attwood	SDLP
Patient & Client Council	Sean McGuigan	Sinn Fein
Patient & Client Council	Trevor Wilson	UUP
Public Health Agency	Cathal Mullaghan	SDLP
Public Health Agency	Stephen Nicholl	UUP
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS)	Sean Clarke**	Sinn Fein
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS)	Arnold Hatch**	UUP

* Appointed as 'individual member' – not as a local government representative member.

** No longer member of NIFRS

Acute Cardiac Services

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether recent changes in the provision of acute cardiac services affected the cardiac surgical waiting lists. (AQW 306/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There has been no change to the requirement for Trusts to deliver cardiac services within the target times specified in Priorities for Action. Those targets are that from April 2009 no patient should wait longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment; 9 weeks for a diagnostic test and 13 weeks for inpatient or day case treatment.

Agenda For Change

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to ensure that, under Agenda For Change, District Nursing professionals will be given their back pay. (AQW 391/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The process for grading for District Nursing professionals is continuing. Staff will be advised of their Agenda for Change banding when that process is complete. Following that, back pay will be processed by the local trust payroll offices; this will be done in line with the same process that has been applied to all other Agenda for Change staff groups.

Child Protection: Ryan Report

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the implications for child health in Northern Ireland of the Ryan Report into child abuse in the Republic of Ireland. (AQO 6/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I was concerned to learn about the level of abuse highlighted by the Ryan Report and want to offer my sympathy to all of the victims.

The implications for child health in Northern Ireland, of the Ryan Commission, mainly arise from the implementation plan published by the Irish Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in July.

Within the plan they have indicated that they are considering legislation to provide for a duty to share information in the best interests of children which will be placed on both agencies and on a range of individuals within statutory services.

My officials are liaising with their ROI counterparts to ascertain the likely extent of these legislative proposals and if the proposed legislation will include the sharing of information with Northern Ireland authorities. Depending on the detail of these proposals they may represent a significant step in underpinning cross border child protection arrangements.

DHSSPS Budget 2008-2011

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the 2008-2011 budget settlement for his Department. (AQO 7/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department faces its lowest uplift in recent times. Over the three years, my Department will receive uplifts of an average of 2.3% in real terms. This compares to average real terms English uplifts of 4%, 2.8% in Wales and 3.2% in Scotland. In addition, the Executive agreed that my Department must secure CSR savings of 3% per annum which amount to £700m over the CSR period.

John Appleby's report on relative funding for Northern Ireland concluded that, taking need into account, Northern Ireland was worse off than England by almost £300m at the start of the period. Given the difference in growth, this figure will rise to almost £600m by March 2011.

I reluctantly accepted the budget on the grounds that it was as good as it gets. The three elements of the final budget settlement include a guarantee of the first £20m of in-year resources; flexibility; and specifically that my Department should bid to the Executive for additional funding in the case of an emergency situation such as pandemic Flu.

Swine Flu: Schools

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the arrangements in place between his Department and the Department of Education to deal with cases of swine flu within schools. (AQO 8/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Officials in my Department are in regular contact with officials in the Department of Education. I met with Caitríona Ruane and Sir Reg Empey on 20th August to discuss swine flu preparations for the new academic year in schools, colleges and universities. The Department of Education has now been given additional guidance from the Public Health Agency. Schools have already re-opened as normal. Advice given to the Department of Education about dealing with cases of swine flu is that if pupils or staff feel unwell and think they might have swine flu, they should go home (or stay at home) and phone their GP.

Another message which I continue to reinforce is that good hand hygiene is very important in helping to prevent the spread of the virus. This is the focus of our Catch it – Bin it – Kill it information campaign. Schools have been asked to promote good hygiene practices among pupils and staff.

The Public Health Agency provides specific public health advice to individual schools on a case by case basis if they have an outbreak of swine flu.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr A Attwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in what circumstances the Rapid Response Vehicle is the most appropriate response. (AQO 9/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The most appropriate ambulance service response to an emergency life threatening incident is a rapid response regardless of whether the paramedic arrives at the scene in a rapid response vehicle or an A&E ambulance. NIAS deploys its emergency response fleet using a tactical deployment plan which means that the nearest available paramedic resource is sent to an incident, be that by means of a rapid response vehicle or an A&E ambulance.

Dental Services: Private Patients

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what regulations and protections are in place to ensure that private paying patients are not being overcharged for dental treatment. (AQO 12/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Private dental treatment is carried out under private contract between the patient and dentist. As with any private contract, charges are normally agreed between both parties at the outset.

The patient has the option of accepting the charges quoted or seeking private dental care elsewhere.

Cancelled Appointments

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if an audit has been carried out on the financial costs of cancelled appointments. (AQO 13/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In April 2007, the Northern Ireland Audit Office published a report on the subject of missed outpatient appointments (i.e. where the patient fails to attend) and cancelled clinics (i.e. where the Trust cancels). The Assembly Public Accounts Committee subsequently considered this report at a hearing in June 2007.

The NIAO report examined the financial and organisational impact of missed appointments and cancelled clinics. It pointed to the potential under-utilisation of manpower and equipment, and the negative impact on waiting lists, resulting from patients' failure to attend or from the cancellation of clinics by hospitals.

Mental Health Care for Older Persons

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's assertion that the modern approach to older persons mental health day support is best achieved by individual care plans rather than centre-based activities. (AQO 14/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I agree with the Trust that the needs of each of its older people should be assessed on an individual basis to formulate tailored care plans. This was also recommended by the Bamford Review which strongly advocated the person centred approach. Part of the care plan could, of course, be placement in an appropriate day centre.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of heart attack patients in the last year received cardiac rehabilitation directly after a heart attack. (AQO 15/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is not possible to provide the information in the format requested.

In keeping with Northern Ireland Cardiac Rehabilitation Guidelines and Standards, cardiac rehabilitation is not only offered to patients who have experienced a heart attack but also to other groups of patients with coronary heart disease.

I recently published the service framework for cardiovascular health and wellbeing which sets a standard that "All patients identified as requiring cardiac rehabilitation, in line with regional guidelines, should be offered this service." A baseline audit to establish current levels of access to these services will be carried out by March 2010.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Culmore Roundabout

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the redevelopment of the Culmore roundabout. (AQW 92/10)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): On Tuesday 8 September 2009, I announced the upgrade of the existing Culmore roundabout to a larger signalised roundabout. Preparatory work has started on site and it is expected that the main contract will start early next year. Information letters have been sent to all local MPs, MLAs and Councillors, as well as a letter drop to local residents to inform them of our plans for this scheme.

A4 at Tamlaght, Enniskillen

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8829/09 (i) to confirm that the improvement works on the A4 at Tamlaght, Enniskillen have been completed; and (ii) to detail the final cost of these works. (AQW 102/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the reconstruction and resurfacing works on the A4 at Tamlaght has been completed.

The final cost of this scheme is expected to be £893,300, with £888,000 having been paid to date.

Bonfire Sites

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total costs incurred by his Department for cleaning and repairing bonfire sites during the summer of 2009. (AQW 111/10)

Minister for Regional Development: As I explained, in my reply to the Member's Assembly Question AQW 113/10, my Department's Roads Service does not maintain details of bonfires lit on public roads. However, Roads Service has estimated that it has cost approximately £84,000 to clean and repair bonfire sites during the summer of 2009.

I should advise that this figure includes approximately £20,000 to repair fire and structural damage to the concrete and road surface of the Lecky Road Flyover in Derry.

Bonfires

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development how many bonfires were lit on public roads during the summer period in each of the last five years. (AQW 113/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain details of the number of bonfires lit on public roads.

However, the table below provides details of Roads Service's estimated expenditure on attending/repairing bonfire sites in each of the last five years.

Year	Estimated expenditure attending/repairing bonfires
2004/05	£80,000
2005/06	£218,000
2006/07	£63,000
2007/08	£60,000
2008/09	£60,000

NI Railway Timetable

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will change the train timetable to ensure the earlier arrival of the first train into Londonderry from Coleraine. (AQW 194/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Following a review of the position originally announced by Translink, changes have been made to the revised timetable initially proposed.

The first train will now arrive in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than at present and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR.

Public Transport

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of how the later arrival of the first train into Londonderry from Coleraine encourages people to use public transport. (AQW 195/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Changes have been made to the revised timetable initially proposed by NIR. These changes will encourage people to use public transport.

The first train will now arrive in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than at present and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR. In addition rail users from Derry to Belfast and Coleraine to Belfast will benefit from reduced journey times of 10 and 15 minutes respectively.

NI Railway Timetable

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline why, under the new NI Railway timetable, the earliest service from Coleraine to Londonderry will arrive at 9.30am instead of 9.10am. (AQW 196/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Changes have been made to the revised timetable initially proposed by NIR.

The first train will now arrive in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than at present and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR.

Belfast to Derry Train Line

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation was carried out in the Derry and Coleraine areas on the proposed new timetable for the Belfast to Derry train line. (AQW 197/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The need for the timetable changes has arisen from the infrastructure upgrades carried out this year between Coleraine and Ballymena to permit faster trains and reduced running times. This will deliver benefits to the users of these services.

In order for these benefits to be delivered the existing timetable has to be amended.

On the one hand, journey times from Derry to Belfast will be reduced from circa 2 hours 10 minutes to circa 2 hours. Journey times from Coleraine to Belfast will be reduced from typically 1 hour 30 minutes to circa 1 hour 15 minutes. This represents significant benefit to the hundreds of commuters who are now travelling every day from Derry to Belfast and Coleraine to Belfast.

However, some aspects of the amended timetable caused me concern and I asked Translink/NIR to review again the options available. Translink has now put forward an alternative set of proposals which means that the first train from Coleraine will arrive in Derry at 9.00am with the 5.05pm train from Derry remaining in place. This timetable will be in place from 27 September.

Translink is expected to pay regard to its Passenger's Charter commitments, which require new timetables to be in the public domain sometime prior to introduction.

Translink is in continuous consultation with customers through "Translink Feedback". NIR have been advising customers from early 2009 that following line reconstruction in April to June 2009 that new train timetables would be introduced in September. However, no specific consultation in relation to detailed train times took place prior to the issue of timetables at stations on 8 September 2009 and I have already expressed my concern at the way this was handled.

NI Railway Timetable

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he intends to take to ensure that the NI Railway timetable for the Londonderry line meets passenger expectations and requirements. (AQW 226/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have intervened, in this case, to ensure changes were made to the revised timetable initially proposed by NIR.

The first train will now arrive in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than at present and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR. The new timetable will also benefit rail users travelling from Derry and Coleraine to Belfast with reduced journey times.

Translink

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there is a protocol in place for Translink staff in relation to the usage of the names Derry and Londonderry when dealing with members of the public. (AQW 250/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has advised me that it has no specific protocol in place for staff in relation to the usage of the names Derry and Londonderry. However, Translink's call centre staff has been instructed to use the name first used by a caller.

Water Charges

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures have been taken to provide assistance to small local businesses and shops with water charges during the current economic downturn.

(AQW 298/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The Executive has taken into account the current economic circumstances and has agreed a deferral of additional household water and sewerage payments for a further year. In light of this decision the Executive also unanimously agreed, in February 2009, to extend the phasing arrangements for non-domestic customers and to introduce a domestic allowance for sewerage. As a result, from 1 April 2009, metered premises will have a domestic allowance for both water and sewerage while unmeasured premises continue to be charged at 50%.

Regional Development Strategy

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the timeframe and process for taking forward the review of the Regional Development Strategy.

(AQO 22/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I anticipate sending a final draft of the consultation document to the Regional Development Committee and issuing for inter departmental consultation next month. I will then seek Executive clearance to proceed to public consultation.

This process takes time and I estimate that public consultation will start around Christmas.

Following a three month period of consultation and the analysis of responses the final document is likely to be published in summer 2010.

City Quays Development

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation the Belfast Harbour Commissioners have undertaken with the community of North Belfast in relation to the development of a master plan for the city quays area.

(AQO 23/10)

Minister for Regional Development: This is an operational matter for the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. However, I understand that they commenced a period of consultation with stakeholders on a master plan for the development of the city quays area in July 2009. This process is currently ongoing and includes consultation with elected representatives for the North Belfast area; North Belfast Housing Action Forum; North Belfast Partnership; Sailortown Regeneration Group; St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Housing.

North/South Co-operation: Infrastructure and Transport

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the prospects for enhancing North-South co-operation and delivery in relation to infrastructure development and transportation.

(AQO 24/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I fully recognise the value of North / South co-operation and this is reflected, strategically, in my Department's reviews of the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy. Co-operation between both Governments has been enhanced through bodies such as the North South Ministerial Council and The Cross Border Steering Group.

The North South Ministerial Council, in Transport Sectoral Format, strives to promote common policies and approaches to strategic transport planning.

My Department's Roads Service has established excellent relations with the road authorities in the South, facilitated through the Cross Border Steering Group, which is attended by lead officials from Roads Service, the National Roads Authority and the Irish Department for Transport. These meetings provide joined-up planning between both jurisdictions to ensure that the Strategic Road Network is developed in a manner that will be of benefit to the whole island of Ireland.

An example of how cross border projects can be delivered can be found in the recently completed A1/N1, Newry to Dundalk dual carriageway.

This level of co-operation is being further enhanced through delivery of the A5 and A8 improvements. You will be aware of the Irish Government's intention to make available £400m to help fund major roads programmes on the A5 Western Corridor and on the A8 Belfast to Larne route. These projects highlight how progress is being made between both jurisdictions, to develop the strategic road network, for the benefit of the whole island of Ireland.

At a local level, cooperation also exists on various roads projects, whereby officials from the three Roads Service Divisions which interface with the South, meet as appropriate with their counterparts in the Southern County Councils.

The establishment of the North West Gateway Initiative, which was announced at the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference in May 2006, further enhanced cooperation between the North and South. This initiative was established to foster and encourage economic growth in the North West area. The objective is to provide a focus for sustained cooperative action from the two Governments which, over a period of time, will make a real difference to the region.

Turning to co-operation on rail improvements, with respect to the Belfast Dublin Enterprise service, NIR and Iarnród Éireann have developed a long term vision, known as 'Enterprise 2020', which includes the reduction in timetabled travel time between Belfast and Dublin. However, this is a long term strategy and much further work is required before the capital and revenue funding will be made available. The Investment Strategy in the North and the successor to Transport 21 in the South, provide the context in which these ideas can be taken forward.

Buses: Biofuels

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the commitment in the Programme for Government to promote the use of renewable energy, what consideration he has given to the conversion of all public transport bus stock to operate on bio-fuels. (AQO 25/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Whilst the procurement of fuel is an operational matter for public transport providers, I am aware that from April 2008, following extensive trials in 2007, Translink, the major provider of public transport services, has operated its entire bus fleet using a blend of 5% bio-fuel and 95% ultra low sulphur diesel.

Translink continue to closely monitor the future availability and sustainability of alternative blends of bio-fuel and diesel in conjunction with normal commercial considerations in the formulation of its fuel policy.

Water Charges

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister for Regional Development how much the further deferral of water charges beyond 2010-2011 would cost his Department annually. (AQO 26/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I answered a similar question from the Member's party colleague Billy Armstrong at oral questions in June this year.

The Executive has not yet agreed future funding arrangements for water and sewerage services.

Based on current estimates deferral of the introduction of additional household payments will cost NI DEL around £1 billion over the period 2010 – 2013. However, these costs could vary depending on the nature of any Executive decision.

Roads: Ards Peninsula

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will provide extra funding for roads on the Ards Peninsula. (AQO 27/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I would firstly like to assure the Member that the structural integrity of the entire roads network, remains a key priority for my Department's Roads Service.

Members will be interested to note that the outcome of the Budget 2008-2011, means that Roads Service's total funding for structural maintenance in 2009/10 has increased to £71.8 million, compared with the initial allocation of £56.3 million in 2008/09. However, I should stress that this amount is considerably less than the independently

established figure of approximately £108m per year, at 2009 prices, that is needed to maintain the structural integrity of the road network in the North. All proposed scheme's, therefore, have to be prioritised.

The Roads Service budget is allocated to its four Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators, tailored to each maintenance activity. The budget allocation for work in the Ards Borough Council area, for 2009/10, is £5.2 million.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to indicate how much of the expenditure for the Ards Borough Council area will go specifically to work in the Ards Peninsula. However, the allocation is distributed throughout the entire council area, based on need and in accordance with other predetermined criteria. The Ards Peninsula therefore receives its fair share of the overall Ards Council area budget and, it would not be appropriate or equitable to allocate a greater proportion of the budget to this region.

North/South Transport Links

Mr A Attwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the recent collapse of the Malahide Railway Viaduct, to outline any proposals he and his counterpart in the Dublin Government are discussing for maintaining and enhancing North-South transportation links. (AQO 28/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Firstly I would like to express relief that, due to the keen observation of an Iarnród Éireann train driver, a potential disaster was avoided. This incident reinforces the need for safety considerations to be given top priority at all times. Safety issues on the part of the track affected are the responsibility of the Southern authorities.

The operational issues arising from the Malahide bridge collapse are jointly the responsibility of NIR and Iarnród Éireann in so far as they impact the Enterprise Service. I have been made aware of the recent timetable changes implemented from 6 September and clearly the need to maintain a sustainable service is important.

I am being kept closely informed of developments and, should the need arise, I will meet with my counterpart in the Dublin Government on these issues.

Prior to the rail incident at Malahide, options had been discussed between the 2 rail companies to improve the reliability of the trains as part of a longer term vision to reduce timetabled travel time between Belfast and Dublin. These issues will be reconsidered once the Malahide railway viaduct is restored and will be taken forward within the context of the Investment priorities and frameworks for both Governments.

Railways: Enterprise Service

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development what practical measures Translink has put in place to accommodate passengers using the Belfast to Dublin Enterprise service following the recent collapse of the Malahide Railway Viaduct. (AQO 29/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The collapse of the bridge resulted in one of the three Enterprise trains (Enterprise trains are jointly owned by NIR and Iarnród Éireann) being stranded on the Dublin side of the bridge. This meant the remaining two trains were left to deliver the normal service between Belfast and Drogheda, from where a bus substitution service takes passengers on to Dublin.

After one week of running the normal service with the two trains, NIR experienced significant operational difficulties. Each train was required to operate 4 return trips per day which is beyond the fuel tank capacity of the locomotive. This resulted in the need to relocate each train daily to Drogheda depot for refueling. This in turn meant that turnaround times at the start and end of each journey were very tight and NIR found it difficult to maintain the normal timetable between Belfast and Drogheda.

As a consequence the number of train services per week day was reduced from 8 to 6 from Sunday 6 September. The revised service amalgamated two off peak afternoon services into one service and two off peak evening services into one service. The primary reason for making these changes is to ensure that passengers can be guaranteed a regular and timely service and this change has been endorsed by the Consumer Council. Passengers continue to receive up to date information on the progress on the repair work and timetables operating.

It is also planned to provide a number of promotions and possible fare reductions. These measures are aimed at ensuring a sustainable service for all passengers.

Crystal Alliance

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the functions taken in-house from the Steria-led Crystal Alliance consortium, and any costs associated with this change. (AQO 30/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has not taken any functions in-house from the Steria led Crystal Alliance consortium. Following the termination of the Steria contract its functions were transferred to other service providers. Four people were transferred from Steria to Northern Ireland Water under TUPE, the cost of which will be approximately £285,000 in a full year.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Heating Scheme for Beechfield Estate, Donaghadee

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when the heating scheme for Beechfield Estate in Donaghadee will go ahead. (AQW 5/10)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): A scheme which includes proposed works to 111 dwellings in Beechfield Estate is currently programmed to commence on 30 November 2009.

New Kitchen Scheme for Beechfield Estate

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when a new kitchen scheme for Beechfield Estate in Donaghadee will be considered. (AQW 6/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive completed a major multi element improvement scheme within the Beechfield Estate in 1993/94. Kitchens within Housing Executive stock are normally scheduled for replacement on a 20-year life cycle and therefore the kitchens in this estate are not due for replacement until 2013/14. A scheme will be programmed for kitchen replacement in this area at the next annual programme review which will take place in early 2010.

Pensioners' Bungalow Scheme for Ballyree Drive

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when the Pensioners' Bungalow Scheme for Ballyree Drive in Bloomfield Estate will begin. (AQW 7/10)

Minister for Social Development: Improvement works to the one bedroom bungalows in the Bloomfield estate was programmed in three phases - Phase 2 of the proposed improvement works includes the bungalows at Ballyree Drive. The work to improve 44 dwellings is unlikely to commence before April 2010 as this is dependent on the availability of funding.

Flats at Loughview Estate

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department plans to go ahead with the demolition of the flats at Loughview Estate in Holywood, and if so, when. (AQW 8/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is currently concluding an economic appraisal outlining options for the West Green area of Holywood.

These are expected to be submitted for approval in the autumn and I will make an announcement on our plans at that time.

Improvement Grants

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development how many improvement grants have been issued for the 538 properties in the Village Redevelopment area within the last ten years; and the total value of these grants. (AQW 23/10)

Minister for Social Development: The number of grants paid in the proposed Redevelopment Area within the Village area since 1 September 1998 was 52, and the total amount of grant aid paid was £517,613.

Improvement Grants

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development how many improvement grants have been issued within the designated improvement area of the Village in the last ten years; and the total value of these grants. (AQW 25/10)

Minister for Social Development: The number of grants paid in the designated improvement area within the Village area since 1 September 1998 was 66. The total amount of grant aid paid was £624,195.

Self-employed Persons

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development to detail what services and practical and financial support have been (i) offered; and (ii) provided to self-employed persons who are unable to claim Job Seekers Allowance but are in need of practical and financial assistance in the current economic climate. (AQW 34/10)

Minister for Social Development: Jobseeker's Allowance has a contribution-based and an income-based element. Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance is intended to help people who have paid enough Class 1 National Insurance Contributions and experience short spells of unemployment between jobs.

Those unemployed people, including the self employed, who do not qualify for contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance and are in financial need will be eligible to claim income-based Jobseeker's Allowance but any other income a person may have will normally be taken into account when calculating the amount payable.

Income Support is also available for people who are not required to be available for work and whose resources are insufficient to meet their day-to-day living expenses.

For those not entitled to social security benefits, other financial assistance may be available from the Social Security Agency under the Social Fund scheme through the award of an interest free payable Crisis Loan. The award of such a loan is dependent on the individual's circumstances and the nature, extent and urgency of the need.

The Department for Employment and Learning provides a comprehensive range of services to help people, including the self employed, find and remain in work. These are: job search; job brokerage; work-focused interviews; and the Department's range of employment programmes including Steps to Work, Pathways to Work, Progress to Work and specialist programmes and services for people with disabilities.

Social Security Benefit Fraud

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many residents in the Republic of Ireland have been detected and convicted of crossing the border and committing Social Security Benefit fraud in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what was the monetary value of these frauds. (AQW 47/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Social Security Agency's systems do not record details of whether persons detected and convicted of benefit fraud were officially resident in the Republic of Ireland. The Agency records information relating to all individuals detected and convicted of 'Cross Border' benefit fraud offences against the Northern Ireland Social Security system, irrespective of where they reported that they were living.

The table below shows details of cases where a 'Cross Border' benefit offence has been committed against the Social Security Agency. Information is only held in respect of the last 3 years plus the current year.

Cases where a 'Cross Border' benefit offence was involved	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009 - 8th September 2009
No of cases detected	14	13	12	9
Total monetary value for cases detected	£154,554	£177,193	£262,412	£96,711
No of cases convicted	0	1	3	1
Total monetary value for cases convicted	£0	£19,083	£28,470	£6,280

Flats at Conlig Estate

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when the flats at Conlig estate will be demolished. (AQW 108/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is selling these flats on the open market as part of the Breezemount Regeneration Strategy. Any plans for their retention or demolition after that sale will be for the new owners to determine.

Derelict Bridge

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on proposals to remove the derelict bridge across the Sixmilewater at Alexandra Park and Grainger's Mill in Muckamore, Antrim. (AQW 167/10)

Minister for Social Development: I visited Sixmilewater River at Grangers Mill on Thursday 27 August 2009. My Department is currently working with the Rivers Agency to consider the options available to prevent a repeat of the flooding of August 2008. Removal of the bridge and the impact thereof is one of the options under consideration and I expect to receive a report on this matter from my officials within the next few weeks.

I will be happy to contact you again at that time.

Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if she would be prepared to purchase the homes within the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme that have not been sold and to reintroduce them as Housing Executive properties. (AQW 183/10)

Minister for Social Development: I would be prepared to purchase a SPED acquisition which had previously been in social ownership and reintroduce as Housing Executive stock or through purchase by a Housing Association. The policy is to dispose of the property on the open market, however if there is a high level of unmet urgent housing need or the property suits the special needs requirements of an applicant and such requirements would not otherwise be met in a reasonable period of time, the property would be used for social housing.

Budget

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline her budget for the next financial year. (AQW 238/10)

Minister for Social Development: The initial budget allocations for the 3 years 2008-09 to 2010-11 for all Departments, including Social Development, were set out in the Budget 2008-11 document published by the Executive in January 2008.

The overall allocation for my Department in respect of 2010-11 is £817.7 million. In addition, the Department's Annually Managed Expenditure budget for 2010-11, covering mostly social security benefit expenditure and the Financial Assistance Scheme, amounts to some £5.3 billion.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development to outline how having two companies involved in the Warm Homes Scheme improved efficiency and value for money. (AQW 247/10)

Minister for Social Development: The aim of the new approach to procurement in the Warm Homes Scheme is to maximise value for money for the taxpayer. This approach was developed in light of the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and subsequent Public Accounts Committee report on the Warm Homes Scheme and allows the Department to benchmark performance and cost to ensure the delivery of a quality, value for money service. The new contract was awarded on 01/07/2009 to H&A Mechanical Services Limited and Bryson Charitable Group. Monitoring arrangements are in place and monthly performance meetings are held with Department officials and Northern Ireland Housing Executive, who are the scheme administrators. An interim evaluation is planned for December 2009, six months after commencement of the new scheme.

Job Seekers Allowance

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development for the average time taken by each Social Security Office from receipt of an application for Job Seekers Allowance to a decision being made on that application. (AQW 256/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Social Security Agency aims to process new claims to Jobseekers Allowance within an average of 14 days. The information requested is set out in the table below.

JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE AVERAGE ACTUAL CLEARANCE TIME (DAYS)

Office	YTD August 2009*	Office	YTD August 2009*
Andersonstown	10.8		
Antrim	10.9	Kilkeel	16.2
Armagh	12.2	Knockbreda	10.1
Ballymena	8.6	Larne	9.8
Ballymoney	9.6	Limavady	10.1
Ballynahinch	12.1	Lisburn	10.5
Banbridge	7.5	Lisnagelvin	10.3
Bangor	12.5	Lurgan	17.2
Carrickfergus	9.6	Magherafelt	10.1
Coleraine	9.4	Newcastle	13.5
Cookstown	12.1	Newry	13.3
Corporation St	10.3	Newtownabbey	14.1
Downpatrick	11.2	Newtownards	12.1
Dungannon	13.4	Omagh	11.6
Enniskillen	10.9	Portadown	15.0
Falls Rd	7.6	Shaftesbury Sq	9.1
Foyle	10.4	Shankill	9.4
Holywood Rd	14.0	Strabane	10.6

* year to date covers the period from April 2009 to August 2009

DSD Budget

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to provide an update on her Department's budgetary position. (AQO 35/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Department's budget for 2009-10 is divided into three separate pots, reflecting the broad spending areas of Social Security, Housing and Urban Regeneration. Following the June Monitoring round, the current expenditure limit is £767m. There are many funding pressures but the main pressure for my Department is in relation to the Housing budget. This has arisen as a result of the shortfall in capital house and land sales receipts due to the economic downturn. The Budget 2007 settlement anticipated some £73.6m in house and land sales receipts in 2009-10, but the latest estimate is that only £7m will be realised.

I have done what any conscientious Minister would do and that is try to protect the budgets which directly affect the most vulnerable. I have protected the newbuild programme so that we can maximise help for those in housing stress (while helping the construction sector). I have also protected the budget for Warm Homes, for people facing fuel poverty, and for Supporting People, so that people can live in the community instead of institutions. A consequence of this is that we face unprecedented pressure on housing grants and maintenance budgets.

I have tabled bids in excess of £84m in the September Monitoring Round and am relying on being afforded a degree of flexibility to redirect, reprioritise and adjust resources across all my business areas. I have consistently impressed upon Executive colleagues the indisputable benefits of injecting funding into Housing, a point supported recently by informed external economic consultants, John Simpson and Professor Mike Smyth of the University of Ulster. This would provide much needed social housing for the homeless and prevent further job losses in the construction industry, thus protecting many of the most vulnerable in society. As the year progresses, my officials will continue to monitor and manage the budget position very carefully.

DSD: Public Consultation

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the rounds of public meetings and consultations she is having in the broad area of social development. (AQO 36/10)

Minister for Social Development: I thank the Member for her question. Over the past month or so I have undertaken a series of public meetings across Northern Ireland. I will be finishing my first round of 10 meetings next week but frankly I have found the experience so useful I intend to extend the programme further.

The point of the public meetings is simple. They give me the opportunity to hear at first hand ideas and suggestions on how my Department, the Executive and society in general might go about tackling one of the biggest challenges we face but have yet to summon the will to tackle. I am talking of course about the legacy of separation, segregation and sectarianism that scars our past and present, and will blight our future if we sit back and do nothing.

More than a decade after the Good Friday Agreement, society seems to have changed little. For the most part we still live apart, we are educated apart and socialise apart. And this despite survey evidence that the vast majority of us, if given the choice, would choose to live in mixed communities.

That strikes me as a very important agenda and so in the public meetings I am seeking ideas and suggestions on how we might go about the normalisation of our society and I have to say there have already been some good and insightful suggestions.

Ross Street Flats, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to Ross Street flats (i) if she has visited the flats; (ii) if she stands by her statement that these flats are well maintained; and (iii) who her officials consulted before rejecting the Housing Executive's recommendation to demolish the flats. (AQO 37/10)

Minister for Social Development: I have visited the Lower Falls on a number of occasions and am well aware of the issues surrounding these particular flats at Ross Street. I haven't been to the flats themselves yet, however, I was pleased to have had the opportunity to engage with local residents at the recent public forum in Belfast, when a number accompanied your colleague, Fra McCann, to our meeting discussing a Shared Future.

Broadly, the flats are reasonably maintained, but they were built in 1976, just over 30 years ago and require general updating.

Let us be clear, I want to increase the supply of housing to help those in greatest need and I will not put people out of their homes to demolish perfectly good housing if other solutions are available. I have yet to hear a good housing argument in favour of demolition.

In the Lower Falls alone there are nearly 300 people on the waiting list to be housed, 200 of them in Housing Stress. With an average waiting time of 28 months before an allocation is made, I do not want to put another 20 people from their homes just because of the actions of those who come into the area to use it as a playground for anti-social behaviour and criminality.

The fundamental problem here is not the flats themselves. We must address the core problem of anti-social behaviour. From a housing perspective we will look at a range of environmental improvements that will make the area itself less appealing for those who would use it for their anti-social behaviour whilst making it more appealing for those who live there.

My officials have already discussed this decision with the Housing Executive who will now develop plans for both refurbishment of the flats alongside wider environmental improvements to the area which should deliver the desired outcome we all want, not least the residents of Ross Street.

I am actually quite surprised at the line being adopted by the Member, who also serves this House as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. He seems to be saying that because there is bad behaviour, the solution is to demolish millions of pounds worth of housing. That in my view would be financially irresponsible. I can imagine how he might view it as PAC Chairman if he was considering a report where large numbers of units of serviceable accommodation had been demolished by Margaret Ritchie just because it was popular with local residents. So maybe he should be asking himself some questions.

Housing Executive Grants

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of the £20 million her Department was allocated in the June monitoring round is being directed to private sector discretionary grants for replacement, renovation and repairs. (AQO 38/10)

Minister for Social Development: Before dealing with the number directly, might I commiserate with the Member on the recent defeat of the Tyrone Senior Football team at the hands of Cork. I trust he, like me, will be cheering for Armagh's Ulster-Championship winning minor team which is competing for all-Ireland honours.

The answer on the £20million June Monitoring money is straightforward. 75% of it i.e. £15million is being directed at Private Sector Grants – the remainder to Disabled Adaptations. The £20million is welcome but given the magnitude of the challenge, there is the danger that despite our valiant efforts we end up – like Tyrone – just falling short of what is needed.

Shared Space

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to explain the concept of 'shared space' and to confirm if she has had any communication with interface groups about how her Department can help to resource their work. (AQO 39/10)

Minister for Social Development: I consider that 'shared space' is the creation of places where every person in Northern Ireland, regardless of their Section 75 group, can live, work and spend leisure time free from intimidation and where diversity is welcomed and respected.

The creation of shared spaces and ultimately a shared future permeates the work of my Department. I have placed shared space at the heart of all my endeavours in housing and have launched a Shared Neighbourhood Programme to enable 30 existing estates to realise this goal. My Department's urban regeneration masterplans and public realm schemes have, as a core objective, been making public space attractive for people to relax in and live at peace together. In Neighbourhood Renewal the creation of Shared Future is also a key priority as we cannot move forward tackling disadvantage without it.

To achieve this goal my Department meets and engages with interface groups throughout Northern Ireland. Funding for a number of these groups is also provided by my Department through various initiatives such as

Neighbourhood Renewal and community capacity building programmes. The discussions I have led through my current round of public meetings have included discussion of the difficulties faced by interface communities.

Marine Gardens, Bangor

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed Marine Gardens development in Bangor. (AQO 40/10)

Minister for Social Development: On 10 June, I announced a public consultation on the proposed Marine Gardens development at Queen's Parade in Bangor. Due to exceptionally high levels of interest in the scheme, I extended that consultation period until 24 July.

Almost 700 responses were received to the consultation exercise. My Department is carefully analysing those responses. A report of the consultation will be published before the end of September. I will take my decision on whether the Department should support the scheme after that report is published.

Housing: Finance

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the financial challenges facing housing programmes at present. (AQO 41/10)

Minister for Social Development: Due to the downturn in house and land sales the Housing Executive started this year with a £100 million shortfall, which is having an impact on all housing programmes. Additional funding of £20 million was allocated in the June Monitoring Round, however pressures of over £80 million still remain. Bids have been submitted through the September Monitoring Round to cover the shortfall in funding for both capital and revenue programmes.

Mortgage Rescue Scheme

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people have been evicted from their homes since the announcement of the mortgage relief scheme nearly 18 months ago; and (ii) when the mortgage relief scheme will be in place. (AQO 42/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department does not hold the information requested. However, figures on Mortgage possession actions are published on a quarterly basis by the Northern Ireland Court Service.

In the absence of sufficient funding to launch a Mortgage Rescue scheme, earlier this year I provided additional funding for Housing Rights to launch the Mortgage Debt and Advice Service, which now provides specialist advice for people experiencing mortgage difficulties to help them remain in their homes. I will continue to bid for the necessary funding for Mortgage Rescue during in year monitoring rounds.

Visit to Messines and Brussels

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development to report on her recent visit to Messines and Brussels. (AQO 43/10)

Minister for Social Development: I accepted an invitation from Glen Barr OBE, of the Maydown Ebrington Group to visit historical sites in Belgium as part of the International School for Peace Studies. The visit was extended to enable me to carry out a programme of events in Brussels.

While in Belgium, I visited Messines in support of the work currently being undertaken by the International School for Peace Studies, led by Mr Barr and the Maydown Ebrington Group. This programme, which my Department funds under the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund, aims to promote peace and reconciliation between communities in disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. It uses the experiences of those from both parts of Ireland who fought and died together during the First World War in Belgium and in and around Messines in particular.

I had the opportunity to visit a number of cemeteries and memorials to the men of the 16th Irish and 36th Ulster Divisions. I also met with local political representatives who have been advocates for the work of the International School for Peace Studies.

My visit last week was timed to coincide with that of a group of young people from three different schools in Derry who were taking part in the Peace Studies programme. I was honoured to have the opportunity, along with these young people and their teachers, to participate in a memorial service at the Menin Gate in Messines.

During my short visit to Brussels I attended 8 separate events and met with a range of politicians and officials including the newly appointed Commissioner for Regional Development Mr Samecki and the new chair of the Parliament's Regional Development Committee – Ms Hübner. In my meeting I emphasised the important contribution the EU has made to Northern Ireland but that much still needs to be done to tackle the problem of segregation, and that a further EU contribution to this would be welcomed.

Housing: Intimidation

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister for Social Development what plans she has to review the allocation of intimidation points to ensure that those in genuine need are rehoused and that those making fraudulent applications are clearly identified. (AQO 44/10)

Minister for Social Development: With increased political stability in Northern Ireland, incidences of sectarian intimidation have reduced significantly. Even though the definition of intimidation has been amended to include racist and homophobic issues as well as serious neighbour disputes, the number of intimidation cases has been decreasing steadily since 2002. New and tougher approaches to dealing with anti-social behaviour also provide more scope for making the applicant's home safe through discussion, support, mediation and, in some cases, legal action.

My officials are currently reviewing how certain components of need are dealt with and this review may well result in changes to the Common Selection Scheme. Any changes to intimidation action will of course take into account causes of intimidation, level of threat, and standard of evidence.

Living Over the Shop Scheme

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the £500,000 made available for the Living Over the Shops scheme, to detail (i) the source of this additional funding; (ii) how it will be delivered; and (iii) in which towns. (AQO 45/10)

Minister for Social Development: We all know that for far too long, many town centres have been seen as being alive only during shopping hours. The Living Over The Shops initiative is an important regeneration tool which breathes new life and vitality into town centres by converting under used retail space into housing. That is why I felt it important to secure funding for this important work during the current financial year. The continuation of this scheme will not only enhance our urban regeneration activity, but will provide much needed additional housing in areas of high housing need.

Additional funding for the scheme – beyond the £320,000 already committed by the Housing Executive - has been sourced from within DSD's Urban Development Programme in order to make grant available within the 23 already designated Town Centre Living Initiative Areas

The locations are as follows – Antrim, Armagh, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Ballynahinch, Bushmills, Cookstown, Derry, Donaghadee, Downpatrick, Dromore, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newtownstewart, Omagh, Portaferry, Strabane, Tandragee and the Woodvale and Shankill Roads, Sandy Row and Donegall Road and Newtownards Road, all in Belfast.

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